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DIDO
Queen of Hearts

BY MRS. ATHERTON

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GERTRUDE ATHERTON

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Queen of Hearts

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PART ONE

[I]

ELISSA had finished her breakfast of figs and bread on the roof of the palace and clenching her hands into nervous fists walked back and forth. She had dismissed her handmaidens and was alone on that vast and irregular expanse.

Even when engaged in profound meditation she never bowed her head, but held it uncommonly high as became a princess of the House of Tyre. Not even to Pygmalion her brother and King would she bend that regal head, for she never forgot that she, Elissa daughter of Mattan, should have reigned jointly with the usurper. So had been her father's decree; but the people had refused to be governed by a woman, and proclaimed Pygmalion sole monarch of Tyre, leaving her with only the inadequate support of the nobles, who had submitted without audible protest. The Tyrians, great in commerce, and eager for riches and more riches, kept peace among themselves, even as with the mighty races beyond their mountain barrier. Other cities on that long narrow strip of coast had

been besieged and conquered, but Tyre had always made profitable terms, and if to-day she paid tribute to Assyria, the yoke rested lightly and she was wealthier and more energetic than ever.

For seven years Elissa had been forced to live in something less than royal state, consoling herself with the devotion of her husband and the fealty of the nobles; who, within the guarded doors of the throne-room addressed her as Queen and bowed low before her. Not once had she crossed to the mainland to render homage to her brother in his palace; after one memorable scene he and his ministers had left her to her own devices.

He was now sixteen and she twenty-three. She looked a mere slip of a girl despite her rounded form and majestic mien, but he was tall as a man full-grown, heavily built of figure, fully aware of his lofty state, and both violent and crafty, his mind matured by association with his counselors.

Elissa both hated and feared him—as much as it was in her to fear any one. On the rare occasions when they met she treated him with the smiling condescension of an elder sister, making him feel an awkward youth, numbing his awareness that he was sovereign of the greatest little kingdom in all Asia. It was the only revenge possible and she derived a human satisfaction in exerting it.

But this morning pettiness had no part in her mus-

ings, as she stared blankly down over the lofty roofs of Island Tyre, rising tier upon tier almost to the top of the crescent hill, with its crowds in the market-place, and its ships at anchor in the canal that connected the northern and southern harbors. The atmosphere was of such an extraordinary clarity she could almost have distinguished the expressions of the gesticulating men on the decks.

Nor did even the loud bustle on the mainland half a mile away divert her attention, although it was a favorite pastime to watch the great caravans, laden with the wealth brought by the fleets from distant lands, preparing for their long journey to Damascus and the Euphrates: the restless concourse of camels, horses, and mules, the sweating swearing men loading them with precious wares, merchants shouting orders, women and children crowding about and chattering their farewells, possibly weeping; the slaves torn from foreign shores, with rings in their lips, who would plod the long weary miles on foot. All the plain beyond the walls of the mainland city was a seething noisy mass of bipeds and beasts, but at nightfall it would be as calm as the tombs on the foothills, for the caravan would be on the other side of Mount Carmel, started on its four months' journey to the Persian Gulf. It would return with sacks of gold and jewels, of which she would receive her share; both King and counselors were too wise to give her further cause for unrest,

and her stately little figure was always hung with gold of Ophir, emeralds, rubies, diamonds or sapphires. Her husband had untold wealth, but it was hidden, and she knew that King and counselors coveted it day and night. None but she and Sychæus knew the deep hiding place of that treasure.

It was of that she was thinking as she walked about the roof. Of late rumors had come to her and she feared for her husband's life. His office of High Priest would not protect him if those foul villains were bent upon indulging their greed.

Almost she was persuaded to let them have it, for she was very happy. Her long black eyes flashed and melted and a smile rippled over the sternness of her features, her full red mouth relaxed, and she wrinkled her straight lovely nose with delight. She forgot as so often before that she was aught but the happiest of wives, forgot that she was a dethroned queen with none to pay her public homage. She had been married at sixteen to Sychæus, left regent by her father's will, for he was of the blood royal, and the head of the aristocracy. The regency had been brief but not their mutual passion. It had compensated for many things, even that no children had blessed that consummate union. But not for all. Sychæus was indifferent to his loss of power. He had his office of High Priest of the Temple of Baal-Melkart, deity of the city of Tyre, the most beautiful princess in Phœnicia to wife, and

his riches. To her pleadings that he stir up a revolt he was deaf; he was twenty-eight years older than she, deeply religious, and with all the love of peace that distinguished his countrymen. Never would he be the author of bloodshed; assuredly not in a hopeless cause. The people would make short work of the nobles if they turned from words to arms in behalf of a woman. There may have been queens in Egypt, but there should be none in Tyre, made great on sea and land by men alone. Moreover, Pygmalion was a King after their own heart, as keen for gold as for the hunt, who gave constant audience to the merchants, and was as interested in navigation as any of his Captains; who made magnificent sacrifice when the fleet was about to sail for the Pillars of Melkart and into the fearsome ocean beyond; never forgot that Tyre was the foremost commercial city in the world, and the only one to venture out of inland waters. What would they be under a High Priest and a woman?

The radiance faded from Elissa's face and left it once more proud and stern. Never should they have her husband's treasure, and never would she bend the knee. Sychæus must double the guard. Sovereignty might be denied her, but she would keep her husband and thwart his enemies.

A slave appeared on the roof and prostrated himself.

"What is it?" she asked impatiently. "Have I not given orders that I be left undisturbed?"

"True, O Princess of mighty Tyre," mumbled the man as distinctly as he could with his head lower than his heels, for the roof sloped where he lay. "But my lord, the High Priest of Baal-Melkart, is about to make sacrifice for the fleet that sails on the morrow and the caravans that depart to-day, and sends word that he desires the presence of Elissa in the Temple."

"Very well. I will go as my lord wishes it."

The slave crawled backward and she turned her eyes to the southwest where many men were moving toward the Temple of Baal-Melkart, deserting the market-place and streets. She stared and frowned as she saw the forms of several women among them, for she alone as princess royal and wife of the High Priest was permitted to enter the Temple on a day of supreme sacrifice. And then she remembered there had been rumors of late that the new King of Assyria, discontented with mere tribute, was minded to invade Phœnicia with the intention this time of making a complete conquest of Tyre. Could it be possible that children were to be offered up to the great god Baal, that he might be persuaded to avert the wrath of the Assyrians? Her husband had spent the night in the Temple; if he had known of the King's order before he left he had made no mention of it to her.

Accustomed as she had been from childhood to the

sacrifice of infants when danger threatened the kingdom, it revolted her still, and she had more than once expressed her angry disapproval to her husband. And not on the grounds of humanity alone; she feared the deteriorating effect on the people as their sly gloating eyes witnessed that act of wanton brutality. In time it might prove to be as powerful a factor in their downfall as the luxury that had ruined Sidon. Moreover, it was a waste of good human material. Hard, practical, worshiping wealth and power as they did, she wondered it had never occurred to those men that every little boy sacrificed might be a potential merchant to add to the prosperity of Tyre. Sychæus listened to her impassioned arguments with respectful attention and admitted their truth; but he had consigned too many babies to the maw of Baal, and was too profoundly religious, to question the decree of the god. If babies becharmed Baal let his belly be filled with them.

She saw her brother in his blazoned chariot, followed by his imposing retinue on horse, and shook her fist at him. Nothing would please him more than for her to fail to show herself in the Temple, for he resented her privilege, to say nothing of the absent nod with which she invariably greeted his majesty. After all, she could turn her back on the horrid scene.

She went below to her great bedchamber and her swarthy maidens wound closely about her a purple robe embroidered by the women of Sidon, hung over

her shoulders a long necklace of emeralds linked with electron, clasped her arms and ankles with bracelets studded with divers jewels. On her head they placed a high diadem made from gold of Ophir, engraved with a lively scene of the hunt and pointed with diamonds. Her breastplate was an immense emerald carved with the head of Astarte, nature goddess, and Queen of increase and fecundity. All she lacked was a wand, but even she dared not carry that emblem of sovereignty in public.

Then they led her down the great staircase to the inner court where a chariot awaited her, and she stood straight and proud in her magnificence as the horses dashed through the outer portals and up the road to the Temple. The hurrying throngs crowded together on either side of the narrow way. She was cheered lustily, for the people were willing to love their "amber-haired princess" for her beauty and graciousness, as long as she made no effort to recover her lost queen-hood.

[II]

The Temple of Baal-Melkart stood high on what had been a smaller island until King Hiram some three hundred years before had connected it with the mainland. Its foundations and walls were of stones that in size rivaled those hewn for the pyramids of Egypt, but the flat roof was of cedar from the forests of Lebanon, that long mountain range that bounded Phœnicia from end to end and filled invading armies with dismay.

In the very center of the Temple stood two pillars (symbols of the vitalizing principle in nature), one of gold and one of dark green glass in which glowed a perpetual flame, and between them was a golden statue of Baal with sun-rays darting from his ferocious head and his great legs straddled over bulls, bunches of grapes and pomegranates in his hands. Beside him rose the lofty silver statue of Astarte, her head crowned with a crescent moon. An immense golden laver stood in the tabernacle at the northern end of the Temple, surrounded by other vessels of gold, silver, copper,

jewel-studded: tributes to Baal-Melkart from Sons of Canaan in other states, eager to propitiate the god of mighty Tyre. On all sides were gilded columns on which were set large translucent green glass vases, also lighted from within, and creating the illusion of fabulous emeralds. The walls were hung with cloth of that singular hue for which Tyre was famous, purple with a deep undertone of crimson; and the sunlight filtered through the colored panes of high narrow windows, shedding a baleful light: red, green, blue, violet, on the worshipers below.

Before the brass altar stood the High Priest, a tall man with serene regular features, whose beauty was nowise enhanced by a shaven head. He wore a long white garment and his feet were bare. Only once in three years, before the sailing of the fleet, was the supreme sacrifice made and Sychæus forced to shave his head. Elissa averted her eyes with a frown. To her he was a god among men and she resented the temporary loss of his black clustering curls. It would be at least two months before he looked himself again. Nor did she approve of his appearance in that shapeless linen robe, and she cast a look of hatred at her brother standing on a dais at his right, and clad in cloth of gold sewn with diamonds, topaz, beryl, sapphire, jasper and carbuncles. His coarse hair was dressed high in the fashion of Asiatic princes, his arms were folded arrogantly as he looked down his

hooked nose at the dominating figure toward whom all eyes were turned. His small crafty eyes had a slight cast, and his big red mouth, pushing itself out from a wiry beard, was too large for his face. She emitted a low hiss.

On either side of the altar were golden candlesticks six feet high, and the thin flame of the tapers glowed feebly in the vari-colored sunlight. But not the steady red fire in the open stomach of Baal sitting high on his bulls, and the women who stood before him lowered their eyes as they soothed the babies in their arms. Their features were schooled into a smile of exaltation. One tear, one wail, and the sacrifice would be displeasing to the god, deaf to the anguish of mothers.

The Temple was crowded, and all lifted up their voices in a monotonous chant, as the High Priest laid sheep, rams, and the hind-quarters of bulls on the altar of Baal. There was a sickening stench of blood and sweat and incense, and the atmosphere grew dim. The tapers flickered, and only the green globes gave out a steady light, while the stomach of Baal glowed even more redly.

The sacrifice of the beasts was over. All eyes slewed round as the High Priest moved from the altar and took one of the infants from its mother, who fixed rapt eyes on the awful face of the god, so persuaded for the moment of her ineffable happiness that even her arms hung relaxed. The baby had a sugar-plum

in his mouth to prevent his crying out as strange hands —very gentle hands—took him from his shelter.

The High Priest held him aloft, chanting solemnly in a deep measured voice that filled the Temple, for all others had fallen silent, their ravening gaze fixed on that evil red eye in the god's middle, breath suspended. The High Priest lowered his arms slowly, then with a sudden deft turn of his wrist, he thrust the baby into the blazing cavern. There was a short strangled squeal, and then silence, save for a slight sizzling and crackling.

Some of the infants went down as quietly as if consigned to their cradles, drugged with sleep, possibly with something more potent; others wailed forlornly, one or two piercingly, although with a terrible brevity. One alone made such furious protest that it sounded in Elissa's horrified ears like the indignant cry of a soul that knew itself born for a greater purpose than to feed the fiery vitals of a graven image.

She shuddered and drew her veil over her face. There was a portent of disaster in that baby protest against its abominable fate, and once more apprehension assailed her. She slipped through the absorbed avid crowd, cast a last glance of hatred at her brother's eager strained face, and mounting her chariot returned to the palace.

[III]

SYCHÆUS would remain in the Temple until evening praying to Baal. Restless, unhappy, apprehensive, Elissa ordered horses to be carried on floats to the mainland and her barge brought to the palace steps. Accompanied by her sister Anna and two officers of the Guard, she was soon galloping northward, giving the caravans a wide berth.

It was a lovely spring morning and the plain gay with wild flowers: pink and white oleanders, scarlet anemones, the red flowers of the pomegranate, purple violets. Many little farms and villages, red-roofed, dotted the landscape. Palms fringed the white sands of the shore and there were groves of them everywhere, apes gamboling and peacocks strutting in their shade. The foothills were covered with vineyards and orchards, a low ridge consecrated to the dead. On the mountain were dense forests of cedar and pine, cypress and sycamore; the distant roar of lions came down on the breeze. Here and there were cascades glittering with prismatic hues in the sun. All along the

shore, between the steep cliffs, the fishermen were casting their nets for the shellfish called murex, from whose sac was made the purple dye famous all over the known world.

The Plain of Tyre was five miles deep and joined that of Sarepta in the north, which again merged into the land of Sidon, twenty miles from the island city. Phœnicia was but two hundred miles long and at times shrank to but a mile in width, but Tyre, Queen of the Seas, had made it the envy of mighty and ambitious monarchs.

Elissa was intensely proud of her city, and would have gloried in it even more had Fate permitted her to reign over its destinies. She might have the body of a woman—which she in no wise deplored—but she prided herself upon being the haughty possessor of a masculine mind; and immeasurably superior to her brother's. She knew quite as much as he did of the colonies, of the intricacies of commerce, theoretically of the science of navigation; of the value of the commodities brought by fleet and caravan; of the tin mines of Britain and the ruby mines of Ind; knew far more of the characteristics of the great greedy empires east of Lebanon, and of Israel and Judæa to the south; of the long siege of Troy by the Greeks; more than he would ever know of the history of his own country, and the reasons why Tyre had risen to greatness, while Sidon, once mighty, had sunk to insig-

nificance, and other cities of Phœnicia, scattered along the coast, had neither ambition nor any prospect of importance.

But of none of these things was she thinking to-day.

She drew rein finally at the river Litany, that broad stream whose turbulent source was high in a wild gorge on Lebanon, and flung herself from her horse. Anna gave a sigh of relief as she followed; she hated riding at breakneck speed, but never dared question the will of her imperious sister. It was her destiny to be some one to be talked to or at when Elissa was deprived of the company of Sychæus. She was not without character and much common sense, but she had long since discovered that she must efface her own personality, such as it was, or leave the palace, and her devotion was absolute. There were times when Elissa needed a heavy brake, and she had developed much subtlety. For this reason among others she had never married.

And in truth her suitors were few; she had none of the entrancing beauty of her sister. But her plain little face was wise and kind, and she was rewarded by the love of Elissa, and many secret conferences with Sychæus. Between them they had so far managed to curb a nature sometimes rash and impulsive, despite its obverse of cold calculation, craft, and foresight.

"What is it, Elissa, that disturbs you?" she asked as she followed her sister's rapid pacing along the river

bank. "Is it the sacrifice of the children? But what must be must, and Baal given his due—although I am sorry for the poor mothers."

For a moment Elissa did not reply. Her straight narrow brows were drawn in a frown, and her eyes mere slits between their heavy lashes—black lashes tipped with gold as if to break the startling contrast between eyes and hair. Then her pent-up feelings raged forth.

"I hate them all!" she cried furiously. "I hate Pygmalion! I hate his fawning courtiers! I hate those greedy cruel merchants! I almost hate Sychæus that he defiles his hands and never lifts his voice in protest! But no—I cannot hate him, and in truth it is not of those wretched infants I am thinking. I hate everything about this life and I would leave it. To-day, as I stood there in the Temple—*down on the floor,* when I should have stood in my pride beside Pygmalion on the dais, I felt insignificant, a mere subject—I, Elissa, daughter of Mattan, son of Badezorus—who has no more to say than—than—you! I, whose very life and the life of one even dearer, is at the mercy of a brute not fit to tie his sandals— Oh, I fear! I fear!"

She lifted her face and pressed her elbows against her sides, holding her hands rigidly, palms upward. "O Astarte, beloved, Queen of the night, of the moon, of the stars, who puttest wisdom into the hearts of women—counsel, inspire me. Decree that I shall con-

found my enemies and suffer indignity no more. Inspire me to avert disaster from my loved one. It is I—Elissa—who implores thee."

"But, dear sister," said Anna practically, and taking no note of what she regarded as mere vaporings, "after all, what more could you do for the glory of Tyre did you reign with Pygmalion over her? Is she not the greatest city in the world? Has she any rival in commerce? on the seas? Is any city more fair—"

"Fool!" Elissa caught her by the shoulders and shook her violently. "What of that? What if I could not add to the glory of Tyre—and how do you know that I could not? At least I should be Queen. Do you think that would mean nothing to the proud heart of Elissa?"

Anna freed herself gently and rubbed her shoulders. "No one knows that better than I," she said soothingly. "And your word should be law in Tyre, even as that oaf's is to-day. I hate him as you do. But it must be not only the decree of the people but of our Lord Baal that you are not—"

"Baal! I hate him! He has no justice in him. He is a cruel god who favors only men. Never will I pray to him again. I lift my hands only to Astarte."

"Be careful!" Anna's pious heart fainted within her. "If he hears he will wreak a terrible vengeance!"

"He listens only to men. I fear him not. And do not Tyrians think and do for themselves? All Phœnician

cities pray to Baal, and what but Tyre is mighty in the world to-day? Did he give counsel and aid to the Sidonians when they sank from their great estate, seduced by wealth and luxury and the pleasures of sense? They have built him a great temple and they offer up sacrifice as often as we do, and what answer does he give them? What do they amount to? Their needlewomen are the best outside of Egypt and their men are unrivaled as glass-blowers, and that is all that can be said for them. They have no ships on the sea, they plant no more colonies on far-off shores. They are of no more importance than the fish their city is named for. Baal! He is on the side of the strong. Man must think and do for himself."

"It may be. It may also be he has reasons that we poor mortals know naught of—"

"Speak for yourself! You may be a poor mortal, but I am Elissa, Queen of Tyre by my father's decree and divine right. I was born to reign—and reign I shall," she added darkly. "Astarte has counseled me. We return to the palace."

[IV]

But not to rest. She alternately prostrated herself before the terra-cotta statue of Astarte that stood, clasping a dove to her bosom, in an alcove of her bedchamber, and wandered about the palace, that great rambling pile where she had spent her life, happy in her childhood, happy more often than not with her husband. Mattan too had been born there and seldom took up his residence in the mainland city. Fortunately for her Pygmalion preferred the other and larger palace. It was more modern, and its throne-room rivaled in proportions and extravagant decoration that of the King of Damascus and possibly of Assyria.

Elissa had loved every one of those vast rooms hung with gorgeous textile fabrics from Egypt and Sidon and crowded with works of art: glowing cylinder vases of colored glass more flawless than precious stones and often delicately engraved; bowls of rock crystal; drinking-cups, candlesticks, lamps, flowers, and tables of pure gold; immense plaques of bronze or gold embossed with legends of Tyre or with lively figures of

beasts and birds; seven-branched lamps; groups of figures carved from limestone; Cypriot vases with human heads and broad bands of color; little winged sphinxes, carved alabaster slabs, dwarf gods, and enameled earthenware statuettes from Egypt; great lumps of amber from northern seas; friezes of bronze, portraying biremes under full sail, and inlaid with gold, ivory, and silver; little ivory statues of kings and gods; carved gems scattered on the tables and filling golden bowls, every inch of which was engraved: ornamental metallurgy was the supreme accomplishment of the Phœnicians; no one had ever surpassed them nor would.

But to-day Elissa felt no love of her palace and its treasures, although her passion of hatred for everything and everybody suffered decrease as the day wore on; and when the hour for siesta approached she began to yawn and concluded it were wise to sleep if she could. Anna had disappeared long since, worn out.

Her room was on the southeastern side of the palace, overlooking the sea, and its blue linen hangings, embroidered by the women of Sidon, rustled invitingly in the breeze. Elissa, dismissing her tire-maidens, offered a sacrifice of doves to Astarte, then rose, and lifting her hands chanted:

"O Ashteroth, daughter of Uranus and Queen of Heaven,

O Ashteroth, goddess of the moon and Queen of the stars,
Grant that I sleep and be sweet and beautiful for my lord when he comes.
Give me peace in my soul and my mind, and let me forget hatred and wild longings—

—for a time," she added as an afterthought.

Then she threw herself on the piled cushions of her bed, Astarte closed her eyelids, and she lay relaxed, her face as peaceful and guileless as an infant in arms.

When she awoke and summoned the maidens they rolled in a golden laver, and she disported herself in the perfumed waters, curling her pink toes, laughing happily and splashing her smiling attendants. They rubbed her dry with scented towels, and dressed her in a blue robe embroidered with silver stars, twisted jeweled ropes in her straight long hair—hair that resembled burnt gold rather than amber. Below the column of her throat they hung a necklace of golden acorns, and in her high close little ears massive ornaments that swept her shoulders. When the elaborate toilette was finished they handed her a round metal plate covered with glass, and she surveyed her loveliness with approval.

There was still an hour to pass as best she could before her husband's return to the palace, and she went out to the balcony to await him.

The blue tideless Mediterranean spread before her. The irregular mass of the palace ran out on to a small promontory, the "Egyptian Harbor" on its eastern side and out of sight. She could look both south and west. There was not a boat on the vast expanse, for the fishermen were at supper in their huts. Baal's great golden chariot was riding down the western sky beyond the Pillars of Melkart, which, until the men of Tyre had summoned courage one day and steered recklessly past them, were believed to be guarded by dragons breathing fiery death to all who would brave the awful secrets beyond. But those first of the world's pioneers had found nothing but an illimitable sea with huge waves foam-crested, and more land curving to the north. They had adventured again and again, planting colonies on the coasts of Hispania and Gaul, and discovered the tin mines in Britain and her islands.

This magnificent enterprise had added vastly to the glory and riches of Phœnicia, whose colonies, hundreds in number, were even then flourishing all over the Ægean and Mediterranean seas, on islands and mainlands; loading their fleets with every known commodity from gold, silver, copper, ivory and jewels, to corn and salt fish, wool, wine, and oil. They had factories on the Pontus, the Persian Gulf, and the Red Sea. Great was the prosperity of Phœnicia, now centered in Tyre alone, a small double city of a few thousand men, but men of such restless energy and genius for com-

merce that the great empires of Asia and Africa relied upon her for supplies and barter, although bitterly envious; and the prophets of Israel uttered dire warnings.

Elissa dismissed her prideful musings and wondered if it were true the sun plunged into the sea with a loud hiss that could be heard by the sailors creeping along the shores of Iberia and Gaul, wondered what nightly adventures he had in the fearsome nether world before he appeared once more above the high ridge of Lebanon. What an interesting world it was that she lived in and how happy she would be if she could have everything her own way! She had thought more than once of assassinating Pygmalion, but feared the disapproval of her husband, and doubted if the people of Tyre would accept her even then. And, in truth, despite her fine capacity for violence and hatred, she was not in the least bloodthirsty.

[V]

She heard a heavy step in the bedroom and ran to throw herself into her husband's arms, burning his face with her kisses and giving little ecstatic cries. He was very tired after twenty-four sleepless hours in the temple of the god, and would have slunk away to some far-off chamber and slept for ten more had he dared. There were times when he wished he were twenty-five years younger, or married to some one whose veins were not always running with fire. But this she never suspected, for he was still a strong upstanding man, and very much in love with her. He had even remembered to cover his shaven head with an Egyptian klaft of blue cloth.

He returned her embrace as fervently as he could manage and then delicately reminded her it was time for supper and that he had not partaken of food since he left her the night before.

"You are more beautiful than ever," he said humorously, "but a man to love must eat."

"Oh, what a little beast I am!" Contrition flooded

her and she pulled him out to the balcony and gave him a gay push that sent him into a pile of cushions; then rang a hand-bell to summon the slave that stood always in the antechamber.

"We will sup here, not in that great draughty hall," she said. "I too have eaten nothing since morning, but I was so angry I had no thought of food."

He forbore to ask the cause of her anger for nothing interested him less at the moment, and he feared a tirade that would interrupt the course of a full meal. But Elissa had no intention of introducing the subject of her grievances until her lord was replete and content.

The slaves brought in a table laden with roast meats, spring vegetables, olives and fruits, flagons of wine. Sychæus roused himself from the embrace of the cushions and attacked the repast like a hungry wolf. Nor did he utter a word, although he grunted occasionally in response to the light chatter of Elissa, who satisfied her appetite more delicately. She was amused rather than repelled by his voracity, for men as she knew them were not dainty beings, and a hungry man was a cross between a small boy and a prowling jackal. Moreover, Sychæus was her husband and his imperfections were either lovable or to be taken as a matter of course.

When he had finished at last she brought a basin of perfumed water and a towel, and herself bathed his

face and hands. With a deep sigh of content he extended himself once more on the cushions.

The night had come swiftly and suddenly, but the balcony was hung with little colored lamps in the form of shells that made it almost as light as day. He fain would have slept, and doubted indeed if he could keep awake during the heavy process of digestion. But he smiled up at Elissa, perched on the arm of a chair beside him. She too looked a trifle languid after satisfying a healthy appetite, and he hoped for at least an hour's respite from either endearments or lamentations.

But Elissa's mental activities were unconquerable.

"Are you perfectly happy, Sychæus?" she asked abruptly.

"I never felt happier. Is not this the happiest hour—of the day, I mean," he added hastily. "Baal! How hungry I was! I felt as empty as a goat-skin before the wine is poured in."

"Oh, of course!" she said smiling. "Is not a man always happy after a plenteous meal? But—I mean—are you happy here in Tyre?"

"Here in Tyre?" He repeated the words stupidly. "Where else could I be happier?"

"But—after all—you are only a High Priest when you should have been regent for many years and the husband of a Queen."

"My dear! Have we not had all that out many

times? The office of High Priest is a great one, second only to that of King. And I have you, my beloved and beautiful one. What care I whether you are Queen or princess?" He gallantly smothered a yawn.

"That is it!" she exclaimed passionately. "You are second where you should be first. And I would have you not regent but King. For you are a king among men and you have Elissa to wife."

"I know you should be Queen, darling, but as well wish for the stars to drop from the firmament and crown your lovely head. You know the men of Tyre—"

"I am not thinking of Tyre! We could go far away and found a kingdom of our own."

"Go far away?" He raised himself on his elbow. "What new mad idea is this? Where should we found a kingdom? How should we get there, and who would be our subjects?"

"You have an immense treasure. With but a little of it we could suborn the Captains of the fleet and sail away in the night. I would go far—to the coast of Africa, where there are Phœnician colonies that would welcome us. We should build a great city, palaces, and temples—"

"What wild dream is this?" he demanded in wrath. "Who put such a crazy idea into your head?"

"No mortal," said Elissa proudly. "I take counsel

with no mortal save you. But I prayed to Astarte for counsel and she gave it me."

"Astarte would never counsel pure nonsense. I myself was mad to imagine that such an idea could be conceived anywhere but in the head of Elissa. It is a wonder you do not ask me to sail for Britain and erect palaces and temples of tin."

"Don't scold me, dear Sychæus," said his wife sweetly. "I am really in earnest, and as you receive counsel from Baal, why not I from Astarte? I heard her voice ringing like little silver bells in my ears."

He stirred uneasily. It was true that when fasting he had heard more than once the deep resonant voice of the god in the Temple. "Then I too will take counsel," he said. "When I have slept and rested—for a few days—I will fast and pray to Baal-Melkart-Tsour for guidance—"

"No! No!" She was too wise to express her hatred of the god to her husband, but said all she dared. "I know well the advice he would give you, for is not Baal-Melkart the patron deity of Tyre? Would he lose his High Priest? But does not Astarte stand beside him in the Temple? Are not temples dedicated to her alone? Is she not called Face-of-Baal, and Goddess of Wisdom? Prostrate yourself before Baal and promise you will erect to him a temple on the far African shore as great and magnificent as Solomon's. That

will fill him with pride and desire; but do not ask counsel of him."

"And where in the wilderness would we find gold and bronze and brass to do fitting honor to Baal? to rival the most splendid temple in the world? We should have to flee in the night with what we could lay hands on—we could not carry forests and quarries with us, nor skilled workmen, metallurgists and dyers. And who would be the subjects of the King and Queen of Nowhere? A handful of colonists in a mud village! A fine destiny indeed for the High Priest and Princess of Tyre!"

"The nobles would all go with us. The fleet sails to-morrow. They could steal aboard with their families and treasure in the night."

"To live in mud huts until a makeshift city could be built, with the help—perhaps—of natives!"

"The nobles—and we too—are Phœnicians. We are of the same blood as those adventurous and hardy men who have planted colonies all over the world. They hate their impotence here—men and sons of men who held positions of the highest dignity under a wise and just King. They have the same courage, the same enterprising spirit—"

"Have you been talking to them?" he demanded sternly.

"You know I would do nothing without your per-

mission. Moreover, it is only to-day that Astarte inspired me."

He had been a husband for seven years and knew better than to tell her outright he would have nothing to do with a scheme so impossible. He would pray to Astarte himself, quite convinced that her response, if any, would fail to coincide with Elissa's desires. It was not his first experience of his wife's imaginative flights, and her happy faculty of convincing herself of whatever it most pleased her to believe. He must put her off and strive to make her forget her wild project.

But Elissa knew every twist of his subtle mind, and she was quite as crafty as he.

"There is another thing," she said, "and one that influences me far more than the ambition to be queen in a new country. Pygmalion is ever more desirous of your treasure, and I fear for your life."

"Baal Almighty! And what put *that* idea into your head? A High Priest is sacred. For that matter I can put him off with vague promises."

"You have done that before. He thinks that as your King and brother-in-law he is entitled to at least a part of that treasure. Aslartus and Tadmelak have let fall dire hints."

"What have they, like the rest of the nobles, to do but gossip? And when has any Tyrian's treasure been taken from him? What Tyrian has ever been murdered for his wealth? This is a law-abiding state. Whatever

indignities barbarians may impose upon their subjects, we of Tyre are masters of our own wealth, and as independent as the King himself; as long as we pay homage to him and obey the laws."

"And yet you keep your treasure hidden," she said shrewdly. "Why, if it is as safe as the golden statue of Baal?"

"We have no need of it. There might be a revolution. It is quite true that Pygmalion might steal it if he knew where it was. But he is too well counseled to commit any act of violence. His advisers are all honest and intelligent merchants—"

Elissa played her last card. She burst into tears and flung herself into his arms. "But I know it is true!" she sobbed wildly. "I shall lo-ose you un-unless you c-co-onsent to flee with me. I know th-they will kill you and I c-cannot live w-without you!"

"Well, we will talk it over to-morrow," he said, as he soothed her tenderly. "I will double the guard, and I know how to take care of myself. Have I not when wrestling thrown one man after another? And now, in Baal's name let me sleep, for I am too tired to think any more."

Elissa gave it up for the present and laid her cool fingers on his eyelids. He was soon snoring peacefully.

[VI]

On the following morning while Sychæus was still sleeping, Elissa accompanied by Anna went down into the city bound for the house of Tadmelak. He was one of the most devoted of her nobles, and little given to gossip. If he had definite knowledge of the King's purpose he must be persuaded to impart it. Moreover, he was of a restless adventurous spirit and she knew that any desperate enterprise would appeal to him. His father had been not only Mattan's most valued minister, but an adventurer on the seas, and had brought shiploads of gold from the island mountain of Thasos, high in the Ægean. But Pygmalion would permit no more nobles to go forth and add to their wealth and distinction. Tadmelak was only twenty-seven and very much in love with his princess; Elissa had no doubt of her power to weave his mind to her own pattern. She would have summoned him to the palace, but Sychæus might awake at any moment. She had left word that she went to pray in the Temple of Astarte.

The narrow winding streets of Tyre were not redolent with the perfumes of spring. They stank in truth of garlic, an emanation from the quarters of the dyers, extracting the fluid from the murex, and a light wind from the north carried it over the city. But Elissa was used to this and many other smells, and did not even hold her alabaster bottle of scent to her nose as she hurried along, skirting the market-place crowded with men discussing the prospects of the fleet, betting and bartering.

The great square, built by King Hiram, was surrounded by magnificent public buildings and temples, gorgeously painted, and dazzling in the strong sunlight, but the dwelling-houses possessed little beauty. They were monotonous of surface save for narrow balconies, six or seven stories in height, some of them divided into flats. But they presented a gay appearance on a fine morning, for women leaned from the casements and balconies, chatting with their opposite neighbors, all arrayed in the lively colors beloved of the Semites. These tall houses climbed to the very crest of the hill, but there were many of two or three stories only, and surrounded by gardens, orchards, groves of palms.

"Where do we go?" asked Anna breathlessly, when they had almost reached the summit. "We have passed the houses of our friends Jezebel and Amastarte—"

"I seek neither. I go to the house of Tadmelak."

"W-h-a-t! You go to the house of a man—a bach-

elor—and without your husband?" Anna was trembling with horror.

"Elissa goes where she wills. If you are afraid of losing your reputation you can sit on a stone in the road until I come out."

"You know I will go with you—but it will be all over Tyre to-morrow! And what will Sychæus say?"

"I may or may not tell him. There are times when wives must think for their husbands—and he thinks that whatever I do is right."

Anna had her doubts on this point, despite his fond devotion. She reminded her that Sychæus had scolded her more than once.

Elissa laughed lightly. "He only quarrels for the pleasure of making up. Nor has he ever been jealous. He knows that Elissa would never stoop to break wedlock even did she love him less. But I have matters of great import to talk over with Tadmelak—and that reminds me: I wish you to retire to the far side of the room. What I have to say to him is private—for the present."

"You are not plotting a revolution?" asked Anna anxiously. "Surely you are too wise for that."

"Calm yourself, dear sister. There will be no blood shed in my cause—Ah! I see Tadmelak over there in that little temple. We shall not enter the house—that much less food for the gossips! Remain here in the shade of the palms until I return."

The scandalized Anna sat down on a stone bench, determined not to take her eyes off Elissa. What would that wayward imperious spirit think of next? It would never have occurred to her to question her sister's marital integrity, but she feared malignant tongues that might carry the tale to Pygmalion.

The young man saw his princess approaching, and stifling a cry of amazement, he ran forward and prostrated himself.

"Rise, Tadmelak," she said, "and conduct me to the shade of the temple. I have much to say to you and there is little time."

"Will you not honor me by entering my house, O Queen?" he asked hesitatingly, and was relieved when she shook her head.

"No. We must consider the feelings of poor Anna, who is now hearing every tongue in Tyre wagging."

She sat down on a bench in the open temple, and smiled into the adoring eyes of the young man, a dark handsome young man, whose nose was less curved than was common among the Semites. His mouth was full and red, but firm and good-humored. It was sometimes turned down with discontent, but not this morning. If only she had given him notice of her coming! He would be wearing his finest mantle that trailed a yard on the ground, not a plain schenti ungirdled. His pulses beat high with hope. Had she come to demand of him

a task by which he could prove his devotion? Of more than that boon he had never dared dream.

"Tell me why you have honored me, O Queen," he said eagerly. "I know that no trivial mission has brought you to my house."

"Not, indeed! First I wish you to tell me what reason you have to believe that Pygmalion the King is determined to possess himself of our treasure, even at the expense of my husband's life."

"Oh!" He moved restlessly, and avoided her powerful gaze. "When I was last at court I heard whispers—"

"I will accept nothing so indefinite! If you are convinced that the life of Sychæus is in danger I command you to give me proof. It is I, your Princess, to whom you have sworn the allegiance due a Queen, who commands it."

"Very well," he said humbly. "Never shall it be said that Tadmelak refused to obey the slightest behest of his Queen. I overheard two of Pygmalion's ministers saying one to the other that it would be easy to kill Sychæus the next time they hunted the lion in the forest, and attribute his death to some dire mishap."

"Sychæus shall take part in no more hunts. Now, I wish you to tell him what you have told me, for he laughed at my fears. You promise?"

"I obey you in all things, O Queen—but I doubt if

when it came to the point they would dare. A High Priest of Baal!"

"They would dare anything for gold, and my husband is richer than the King and all his court. Let that pass for the present. I have come for still another purpose. Here too you must help me, for Sychæus is difficult to persuade. I would not only avert danger from him once and for all, but I would live where all would salute me as Queen in public, not behind guarded doors." And she rapidly unfolded her plan.

His eyes were wide with dismay but a moment. They were soon sparkling in his intelligent somewhat reckless face. The plot appealed irresistibly to his mettlesome spirit, and he was bored to extinction in his present life. The nobles were not even permitted to visit the colonies. He had never seen the other side of Lebanon, nor penetrated beyond Carmel in the south. Moreover, to outwit Pygmalion, a man he hated and despised, would fill him with righteous joy. And he would be serving Elissa! To the dangers involved he gave not a thought.

"It could be done!" he cried when she had finished. "The fleet sails to-day, but there will be sixty biremes left to guard the state. The sailors are always resentful at being left behind, and would rejoice in the prospect of adventure. They often express envy of the colonists, who lead a freer life than here, and grow wealthy themselves, even while adding to the riches of Tyre. And,

as you know, those sailors are recruited from all over Phœnicia and owe no allegiance to Pygmalion. Of course they will be told nothing until we are well under way, merely that we go for a brief run at the whim of the Princess. Abbas, the Captain, is my friend."

"Ah, dear Tadmelak, how glad I am that I yielded to my impulse and came to you!" She gave him a dazzling smile that would have turned an older head. "You make it all so simple. But we must take not only the treasure of Sychæus, which is of great weight and bulk, but yours and that of our friends—for all must go with us. And much of our belongings. I shall sack the palace!" she added gayly.

"Many details must be carefully thought out, O Queen. I will summon all the nobles here to-night. The old may be unwilling to embark on such a venture, but I count on all who have any of the fires of youth left in them. And none will betray us—"

"Yes! Yes! And you must win over as many of the old and staid as you can, for to them is Sychæus more likely to give heed. Without his consent we can do nothing." She laughed merrily. "He says we should have to live in mud huts like the other colonists! Does that daunt the Lord Tadmelak?"

"Were I serving you, O beauteous and heaven-born Elissa, I would dwell without a murmur in a sand-cave on the shore. But Sychæus must know little of our colonies if he imagines those ambitious and industrious

men dwell in mud huts. Utica on the northern coast of Africa is a fine city. They will harbor us until we build a great city of our own. It will not take long, for there are thousands of natives who will be forced to work by their King, whom we shall be well able to bribe. A great city of which you will be Queen, O glorious Elissa—"

"And Sychæus King! And you the first of our ministers!"

He flushed darkly and his eyes blazed with something more than adoration of his Princess. The ambitions of his fathers made his heart beat high. He fell on one knee and would have kissed the hem of her garment, but she graciously offered him her hand.

"I go now," she said. "I shall hold court to-morrow night. Every man present must be prepared to do his utmost to persuade Sychæus. They cannot fail to impress him."

[VII]

For two days and one blissful night Sychæus heard nothing more of emigration and flattered himself that Elissa in her radiant happiness had forgotten her silly project. They rode over the plain and up into the frowning gorges of Lebanon, eating their morning meal on a carpet of moss by a charcoal-burner's hut, while the guard kept eyes and ears open for prowling beasts. They sailed on the sea in their private galley, or idled in the great cool rooms of the palace when the heat was too great to venture without. He had never been more the ardent lover, and that alone, he believed, would leave no room for aught else in that restless mind. He had dismissed her fears for his safety as a mere exercise of her lively imagination, or at most a cunning argument to persuade him to her purpose. He loved Tyre almost as he loved Elissa, and he was no adventurer. He liked peace and luxury, good and abundant food, and the converse of his friends. Above all he enjoyed his great and distinguished office of High Priest, and that and the possession of an enchanting wife was enough for any man.

"How beautiful is our city!" he said with a deep sigh of content, as they strolled through the streets in the late afternoon. He waved his hand at the high battlemented wall whose rough surface was covered with shields, not only of Tyre, but of Arvad and other Phœnician cities that had flown to her rescue in times of war long past.

"It is beautiful, but it smells worse than any other city in Asia; of that I am convinced." Elissa ostentatiously removed the stopper of her perfume jar and held it to her nose. "When I am Queen of a city of my own I shall build a little town for the dyers far away."

He changed the subject hastily; not even reminding her they were not likely to find the murex on the African shore. "How sweet are the perfumes of Araby!" he exclaimed. "And how exquisitely wrought that little alabaster jar. Shall we enter the market-place? The sun as it descends beyond the Pillars of Melkart enhances its beauty."

There were few men in the great square at this hour. They greeted Elissa with a deep inclination of their bodies, but did not prostrate themselves, a tribute due only to sovereigns and gods. Elissa smiled graciously and then forgot them. She too was a devotee of beauty, and the magnificent temples and public buildings, including the immense Treasure House, all of stone roofed with cedar, held her entranced, as ever. There were no domes, nor even supporting columns and

arches, but the architecture, if massive, was light in effect, for the enormous blocks of stone were stuccoed and painted, the windows of colored glass that reflected the setting sun. The great doors were of bronze or brass with gold hinges, and elaborately carved. Entablatures and cornices were of Egyptian design, for the Phœnicians were not an imaginative race.

Palm trees and pines rustled in the evening breeze, doves cooed on the flat roofs to their mates, nightingales sang, and the music of harp and flute floated down from the gardens on the hill. From afar came the roar of waterfalls on Lebanon. There were no fountains, for water was brought to Island Tyre from springs on the mainland, but many statues to Baal-Melkart, Astarte, Esmoun, and Bes; statues of bronze, limestone, silver, and brass.

"Where in all the world is there so magnificent a city as this?" cried Sychæus. "Tyre is Queen not only of the Seas, but of Earth itself."

"No one is more proud of her beauty than I, but after all, dear Sychæus, we have never seen the glories of Damascus and Nineveh. They are larger cities than ours, and cities also of enormous wealth. Surely their temples and other buildings must be on a far grander scale than ours."

"All admit the beauty and grandeur of Tyre," said Sychæus proudly; he had wasted little thought on other cities. "No doubt their structures are as barbarous as

themselves—saving only the Temple built for Solomon by King Hiram of Tyre. Did the King of Jerusalem go to Damascus or Nineveh for architects and builders, for carpenters and masons, for stone-squarers and builders, for cedar and fir trees, and rare textile fabrics? That Temple may be of vaster proportions than ours, and contain more gold and other rare metals, for Jerusalem was once a city of great riches, and all the Sons of Canaan paid tribute to her Temple; but to the architect Hiram, namesake of the greatest of our Kings, and the skilled workmen he took with him, it owes its unparalleled beauty. Therefore, it is a part of ourselves, and therefore must our city be more beautiful than any in Asia—or Egypt: the rest of the world would be a wilderness but for the colonies of Tyre—and one or two other Phœnician states," he conceded handsomely.

This logic amused Elissa, but she had her reasons for keeping him in the best of humors. "You know all things, dear husband," she said warmly. "I only meant to tease you."

He smiled down at her fondly. "You have a wise little head and know the truth when you hear it," he said, with less condescension in his manner than in his words. "Our City of the Setting Sun is the fairest of all, and there will never be a fairer. But the lights are beginning to show on the hillside. It is time to return, for you hold court to-night."

[VIII]

Colored lamps, torches and tapers in high golden candlesticks, made a blaze of light in the throne-room, whose walls were hung with fine purple linen, embroidered with suns, stars, and crescent moons. On pillars of porphyry and greenstone were illumined vases of yellow glass. The high windows overlooking the city were open to the breeze; there were none on the eastern side, as the palace backed against the city wall. On the left was the great hall patrolled by faithful slaves. The doors were closed and barred.

Elissa sat on a dais at the end of the room, clad in a flowing robe of gold tissue sewn with jewels, ropes of diamonds and rubies hanging below her waist, heavy gold rings on every finger. Her small proud head was crowned with a tiara sparkling with jewels, and her right hand held a golden scepter tipped with a diamond star. Never had man or woman looked more regal, and her brother, had he seen her, would have covered his head with sackcloth in very shame. In truth, without his robes of state he could have passed as a peddler from Jerusalem.

On the step below her stood Sychæus, wearing a trailing robe of Tyrian purple and a deep jeweled collar, as became the head of the aristocracy and the consort of a Queen. His arms were folded and there was a bored expression on his stately features. He regarded these secret courts as a farce, but if they amused Elissa was he not ever the indulgent husband? Moreover, they might serve the good purpose of satisfying her craving for dominance, and keep other ideas less harmless out of her pretty little head.

The nobles, an hundred-and-two in number, had prostrated themselves and now stood before the dais in an attitude of deep respect, their adoring eyes fixed on their Queen. A few looked pale and anxious, and there was a subtle air of excitement, which, during a brief silence, penetrated to the consciousness of Sychæus. He cast an eye roving. Something was in the wind. A faint presentiment assailed him and he frowned.

Elissa spoke. She had a rich rather husky voice, but with certain bell-like tones when she raised it above its normal register.

"Noblemen of Tyre," she said solemnly. "Men and sons of men who made our city famous on land and sea, whose fathers were the devoted subjects of Mattan and Badezorus, and who now have sworn allegiance to Elissa, you know for what purpose your Queen has summoned you here to-night. Tadmelak has conferred

with you, and you are all of one mind or you would not dare venture into my presence."

She paused. There was a deep murmur of assent, and they would have prostrated themselves once more, but she lifted her wand and they merely bowed low. Sychæus shifted uneasily.

"Tadmelak!" Elissa's voice rang out on its higher note. "Step forth and address the Lord Sychæus. It is my will and your right that you speak for the others."

The young man, looking almost as majestic as the Queen in his robe of Egyptian blue girdled with gold of Ophir, and a jeweled collar only an inch less in depth than that which adorned the chief of his order, left the ranks and made a deep obeisance first to the Queen and then to her consort, the High Priest.

"As my Queen commands, I speak, my Lord Sychæus," he said in a deep grave voice. "And I have prayed to Baal that my words will ring with truth, nor fall on doubting ears. For your life is in danger, my Lord Sychæus, as every man behind me will testify." And with much eloquence, and some embellishment, he unfolded the tale of the King's wicked purpose.

Sychæus turned a glittering eye on Elissa, but she sat like a graven image; all Queen, not a vestige of impulsive girl, nor loving wife. When the young man had finished he shrugged.

"Your words have convinced me," he said curtly. "I shall double the guard, and on one pretext or an-

other refuse to take part in the hunt or to attend the King in his palace."

"But that is not enough," exclaimed Tadmelak. "When a man like Pygmalion—the most obstinate, the greediest, the most cunning and unscrupulous of men —is determined upon a purpose he will accomplish it; if not in one way, then in another. And what is murder to him? Who shall judge or punish him? Safety lies only in flight, and there is no time to lose. The Captain of the fleet now in harbor is my friend and loyal to the Queen. At midnight to-morrow he will have the ships in the canal, and we shall be far away before dawn. There will be no ships left to follow us—"

"Ah!" interrupted Sychæus in wrath. "So! You have made all your plans and without my consent! Without so much as a hint to the High Priest of Tyre! I am no child to be led hither and thither, even at the behest of the Queen—who, after all, is my wife."

And he flashed a marital eye on Elissa.

She met it without quailing, and there was neither humility nor seduction in her voice as she replied. She was a Queen addressing the greatest of her subjects, nothing less.

"Yes, my Lord Sychæus. I have been cognizant of this plan for two days past. You would not believe me, and you would never have consented to leave Tyre until the proofs of the King's perfidy were laid before

you. Time pressed, and we thought it best to exclude you from our confidence until this sage—*safe*—and *inevitable* solution of our terrible dilemma was thought out to its utmost detail. If all these great nobles are willing to leave their ancestral homes and their lofty state here in Tyre for your sake, what excuse have you to hesitate? *Your* life alone is at stake. They have nothing to fear from Pygmalion. They go with us to found a new kingdom in the wilderness, and they go for your sake and mine. If we move quickly there is naught to fear. Delay but a day and some whisper may reach the King, and your murder will be but one of many."

Sychæus stood for several moments with bent head, lost in intense thought, his ears deaf to the hubbub of sound that filled the throne-room. Every voice save Elissa's was raised to persuade him, and rang changes on his name.

He lifted his face at length and met the eager imploring eyes of those five-score faithful subjects.

"Very well," he said. "I consent. But I go first to the Temple to make one last sacrifice to Baal, implore him to lend his august countenance to what I can but think of as a mad undertaking. But I thank you for your friendship and your loyalty. Wait here until I return."

And he strode from the room.

[IX]

Although Sychæus was now fully convinced of Pygmalion's purpose and that his only safety lay in flight, the idea of immediate danger never occurred to him. The murder was to be consummated somewhere in the forests of Lebanon, where, no doubt, they planned to hurl him from his horse in the path of a lion. He had never known the sensation of fear and he went to the Temple attended only by his charioteer. The great quadrangle was deserted. Within there was no one but the night guardian, asleep on a bench.

The Temple was filled with a sea-green radiance, for the fires in the pillar and globes never went out. Baal looked like some awful sea monster astride the wild horses of the deep, and the tall silver statue of Astarte was pallid and withdrawn. But Sychæus was not an imaginative man, and he had prayed many times in the Temple at night.

He had brought a sheep with him, carrying it about his neck, and he kindled a fire on the altar and laid it among the crackling boughs of cedar and pine. For a

full half-hour he prostrated himself in silence, dismissing the morrow and revering the god. Then he rose and lifted his hands to Baal, his voice rising and falling in the chant of adoration. He dared not hope for audible words of comfort, for his ears had not been sharpened by fasting, but he believed that the god he had worshiped for so many years would give heed to his dire predicament and forgive his desertion of the Temple of Melkart.

He recalled the words of Elissa and promised to erect a great temple on the African shore before he laid his head beneath a roof.

"Thy image shall be made from the gold of my treasure," he intoned. "Thine eye shall be of emeralds and thy tongue a great ruby. Thy altar shall be of gold, not of brass, and there shall be jeweled grapes and pomegranates in thy hands. Thy Temple shall be set on the highest cliff that all may worship thee from afar, and its stones shall be inlaid with plates of gold and silver and shine like a beacon for mariners, who will prostrate themselves on the decks. I will compel the barbarian to thy service, and thy Temple shall be filled with worshipers morn and eve. All Libya—"

And then he heard the voice of the guardian raised in a shrill and horrified cry. Forgetting Baal he whirled about, and saw seven officers of the King's Guard advancing with drawn daggers.

His doom had descended upon him, but he was not

the man to sell his life lightly. As those men with their murderous faces, doubly sinister and terrible in the green light, ran toward him, he met them halfway with a brand snatched from the altar. He laid about him with the strength of desperation, blinding one man and felling another, calling down the vengeance of Baal upon them in a loud voice. With his left hand he twisted an arm uplifted to strike and the weapon fell clattering to the floor. He tripped one assailant and grappled with still another. But although he was brave and resourceful and a High Priest in his Temple, he was one and they were seven. These men had never known warfare, but they were young and active and under the orders of their King. One slipped behind him and drove a dagger into his back. He staggered, and another slit his throat. Each of the officers, even he who felt as if his eyes were live coals from the altar, plunged his dagger into the lifeless body. The guardian, who was an old man, ran screaming from the Temple, but was pursued and killed. The charioteer had already been slain.

The treasure was believed to be hidden under the altar. Pygmalion, defying the wrath of Baal, had commanded his men to remove the altar and convey that fabled mass of gold and jewels to his palace before dawn. A spy had brought him word that Sychæus had gone alone to the Temple, and with the quick thinking that distinguished the Phœnicians he had determined

to act without further delay. Sychæus of late years had grown indifferent to the hunt and might not be persuaded into the forest for months to come.

The officers pried up the slabs beneath the altar, but found nothing save the stones of the foundation. They searched frantically in every part of the Temple, sounding the pavement for a hollow response. They even removed the globes and plumbed the pillars to their depths.

"There is nothing here," said the Captain at length. "The treasure must be in the palace, and even Pygmalion would not dare to search for it there. Elissa is beloved by the people and they would protect her rights, for she has been submissive to their will. And it would bring suspicion upon him. We must tell the King that this murder of a High Priest has been for naught, and that the curse of Baal may be upon us. The rich offerings to the gods he has promised us may avail nothing. But what must be must be."

They stole away, leaving the dishonored corpse on the floor where it had fallen. The crime could not be hidden by flinging the corpse into the sea, for the porous flags were stained with blood. Moreover, the least that Pygmalion could do would be to give the High Priest of Baal a great public funeral. Would that he had held his hand.

[X]

For many days the palace was filled with the lamentations of Elissa. She ran from room to room screaming and beating the walls with her hands or lay on the floor wailing and moaning and tearing her hair. Her sister and all the serving-women added their lamentations to hers until they were exhausted. Pygmalion, who made a great show of horror and grief, had every man in the kingdom interrogated. But his secret was safe. The officers had crossed an empty harbor, for the fleet was in the "Sidonian," at the northern end of the island; the watch at the gates below the palace was killed before he could cry out. The night had been dark and the sentries in the towers had not observed the silent swiftly moving galley.

He went over to condole with his sister, but she called him a murderer and drove him from her presence. Not for a moment was she deceived, and he was so terrified by her glaring eyes, her out-thrust hands with their working fingers, that he fled in haste from the palace. He wished bitterly that the crime could be

undone, for the treasure had escaped him, and he had murdered not one of his subjects, but four, staining the proud record of the Kings of Phœnicia.

But for that reason alone would he never be suspected; and, in truth, the horrified Tyrians came to the conclusion that pirates, uncommonly resourceful and cunning, had committed the outrage.

The body of the High Priest, embalmed, lay in state in the Temple, and all Tyre wept at his bier. All save Elissa, who had no wish to see the face she had loved gray in death, that body upon which she had lavished such frantic endearments, rigid and unresponsive in its tight linen bandages. The difference in their years she had never considered, nor had her imagination strayed to a future when age would have unsinewed him while she was still in her prime. He had been gifted with every perfection, and she had listened with amused scorn to the raptures of her friends when discussing their young husbands. What were all men living compared with Sychæus, who had been father as well as husband? She was twice desolate and she refused to sleep or eat.

On the fifth day the great funeral took place, and she forced herself to partake of food and wine that she might follow him to the tomb. To walk was impossible after her long orgy of grief, and she rode in her chariot supported by Anna; the faces of both women concealed under black veils sprinkled with ashes.

All Island Tyre left the city on floats or in galleys and joined the procession already formed in the broad central street of the mainland city; led on foot by Pygmalion uttering loud demonstrations of woe. He was escorted by the officers of his Guard, and none were more vociferous in their tribute than the seven who had desecrated the Temple of Melkart. The whole company lifted up their voices, and the priests of other temples and the priestesses of Astarte intoned.

Oy, Oy, Oy, Oy, Oy, Oy, Oy, Oy, Oy, Oy, Oy, Oy, Oy, Oy, Oy, Oy, Oy, Oy. The sound filled the valley and echoed from the hills.

Elissa's chariot rode directly behind the bier, and she alone was silent, her eyes closed that she might not glimpse for a moment the stone coffin holding that stark thing that had been her husband.

The long procession wended its way through the city and out of the eastern gate, passed the tomb of King Hiram, which all saluted reverently, and crossed the plain to the hills studded with many sepulchers and votive stelæ.

"Elissa," whispered Anna nervously, "I implore that you do not denounce Pygmalion publicly on this solemn occasion. It would be unseemly and would accomplish nothing, for they would look upon it as the ravings of one distraught."

"I shall not denounce him," said Elissa wearily. "I am too tired. Vengeance I will have, but not to-day."

She descended from the chariot, and leaning heavily on Anna, toiled up the hillside to the imposing monument above the tomb where Sychæus would sleep with his fathers. There was a gentle wind in the pines on the mountain, and the merry music of a little cascade mingled with the intoning of the priests. The stone coffin with its rude semblance of a human head disappeared down the steps that led to the steep chamber hollowed out of the rock.

For a moment Elissa forgot her grief as she looked with curling lip at Pygmalion standing just without the portals, ashes on his high headdress, beating his breasts with his fists, twisting his face in the effort to squeeze out a tear. Then her heavy eyelids fell and she drooped against the wall of the tomb. The rest of the company stood with bowed heads and swaying bodies, chanting softly.

The coffin had been placed on its shelf and surrounded with funerary furniture: perfume vases, a flat lamp, a hand-bell, idols and amulets of enameled earthenware from Egypt (the Phœnicians loved precious metals and jewels too passionately to waste them on the dead); the niche was sealed with a stone, and the priests returned to the upper world and closed the portals.

The vast throng, silent now, descended the hill. But not Elissa. She lay wailing at the door, feebly beating

it with her hands. It was not until she fainted that Anna and Tadmelak carried her down to the chariot.

For long there was a terrible silence in the palace, for Elissa lay desperately ill. Pygmalion sent his court physician to attend her, and Anna never left her bedside day or night. Many friends came to share the watch and pour liquid food and nauseous concoctions down her throat. She lay sunken in her pillows, a mere wraith of herself, her white skin livid and her hands like claws. No one believed she would rise again.

But she was young and strong and born to a great destiny. One day she opened her eyes, sat up in bed, and demanded a fowl stewed with vegetables. After that her recovery was rapid, although for a month or more she was languid and apathetic.

She shed no more tears and uttered no more lamentations. Her grief was heavy within her, but the day of its loud expression was past, and her mind gradually swung to the future. Her love-life was over, but the long years to come must yield her compensation and distraction.

She sat at her window one afternoon gazing out over the blue Mediterranean, revolving many plans. How best could she execute vengeance on Pygmalion? To assassinate him was impossible; he was too well guarded. Nor would his ugly carcass give her back her husband. Nor would she descend to his level, she told

herself proudly. Elissa would never stoop to murder. Let him keep his wretched life. But she must punish him, humiliate him.

Her eyes strayed over the boundless sea, lively with fishing boats and pleasure galleys. The sails were as brightly colored as the closely swathed bodies of the women, whose gay careless voices floated over the water. She raised her arms with a gesture of profound weariness.

"Oh, to go far away!" she murmured. "To go far from Tyre and forget! How can I live on in this palace haunted by the memory of my husband and our love? Until I am old . . . old . . . until my memories too are dim. Of what use to take vengeance on Pygmalion? What would that avail me? Oh, to sail far away—"

Her arms dropped abruptly. An eager exultant fire leaped into her eyes. In that moment light dawned upon her. She must have been half-asleep, dreaming, that she had not thought of it before!

She rang the hand-bell that stood on a table beside her, and a slave ran in and prostrated himself. "Send the Lady Anna to me," she commanded; and she beat the arms of the chair with her little fists until her sister too came running in.

Anna had taken to her own bed after the invalid's first meal, but was long since recovered. She dropped on her knees beside the chair and regarded Elissa with adoring eyes.

"You look better than you did when I left you but a short time ago!" she exclaimed with delight. "What is it? You look almost happy."

"I shall never be happy again," said Elissa with the grim confidence of youth. "But I shall have power and vengeance. I wish you to send word to Tadmelak to come here to-night."

But Anna no longer stood in such awe of her sister as formerly. She had seen her as helpless as a sick baby, dependent upon her ministrations. Even when recovering she had obeyed orders meekly and clung to her hand. Elissa, the proud happy wife, the imperious young "Queen," had vanished, and there had even been times when Anna had scolded her for demanding honey-sweets forbidden by the doctor. She might never regain that brief ascendancy, but the time had passed for unquestioning obedience to every whim.

She rose and looked down upon Elissa with a steady eye.

"That I will not do," she said with determination. "You would receive a young man in your house at night? Never, while I am alive! Even did he come to the roof by the city wall he would be seen by the sentries in the towers, for the moon is at the full. All Tyre would ring with the scandal. The people—and the nobles—would hold you in contempt. You, a Princess of Tyre, receiving a young man at night—and not two months since the death of your husband!"

Elissa's face convulsed, but she exclaimed tartly, "Then bring me an old man. Send for Meisor, whose white beard is down to his waist. If you do not I will go forth myself."

"I see no harm in receiving Meisor—but what is your purpose, dear sister?" She looked searchingly at Elissa's white set face. "I fear you plot vengeance on Pygmalion, and I fear the consequences more."

"I shall not let the blood out of his contemptible body, if that is what you fear. I wish him to live—and may he have fifty years of old age! May he be an old man before his time, his teeth and his hair fall out and sight leave his eyes! May he drag his racked joints about whining with pain, an object of contempt and no pity; praying for death to Baal, who will avenge Sychæus by condemning him to live until he is as old as a prophet of Israel! Now send Meisor to me and tell him to come openly. I shall receive him on the roof, where I often sit at night, and where there will be none to overhear."

Anna had listened to this diatribe with satisfaction; Elissa was almost herself again! But she still hesitated, and asked pleadingly: "Will you not tell me what you have in mind? Why should I, the sister who loves you, alone be excluded from your confidence?"

Elissa looked at her affectionately. "I love no one now but you," she said. "In due course I will tell you all. I shall have no secrets from you in the future. But go now."

[XI]

Two days later Elissa sat at her golden writing table, and taking a long slender rod called kalem from its case dipped it in ink and indited a letter to Pygmalion.

It was a short letter, but she composed it with much knitting of brows and nibbling at the end of the kalem, as she drew on a large sheet of papyrus the strange pot-hooks invented by the Phœnicians. In the course of an hour it was accomplished to her satisfaction.

"Dear Brother and King," she had written. "Your sister Elissa, as you well know, is plunged in unending grief, and is sad beyond all imagining in this great lonely palace where she lived for seven years with the Lord Sychæus. Only at night when sleep descends upon her eyelids is she happy once more in dreams. She roams from room to room, and the sight of the very walls is hateful to her. She begs that you will forgive her wicked words uttered in the frenzy of her anguish, for she knows now that pirates murdered her husband, and that Pygmalion would not defile his hands with the blood of the least of his subjects.

"In your even greater palace there is room for Elissa to live in seclusion with Anna and her faithful slaves. I remember a long wing on the western side which in our father's time was not inhabited. There I could dwell in peace, praying to Astarte, and, gazing out upon the sea, dream of my lost happiness. I would take my own furniture with me and many of the beautiful things I have been surrounded by all my life—if you will send the fleet now in harbor to convey me across; my possessions are too many for the floats. Moreover, I would leave my palace for yours in all the state that befits a daughter of Mattan.

"As you have always disdained this old palace there will be no one to look upon its dismantling, and although I would fain never see it again, I would have my treasures with me.

"I pray that you will look with favor upon my humble request, Pygmalion, my brother and King, and your sister will be grateful without end.

"ELISSA,
"Princess of Tyre."

Her lips, no longer as mobile as of old, twisted in a sardonic grin as she read this cunning epistle over. Not once had she alluded directly to the treasure of Sychæus, but he must assume that she would bring it with her, and hasten to grant her "humble request."

Pygmalion was crafty and suspicious, but he was no

match for his sister. He had heard not a rumor of the elaborate plot that would deprive him of sixty biremes, all but the oldest of his nobles, even more than the treasure of Sychæus—and make him the laughing-stock of princes. She would never leave that treasure behind her; nor would it reach her apartments. And he need never set eyes again on that violent supercilious girl he hated. Within his walls there would be none to heed her outcries.

It is possible that in normal conditions his mind might have been open to suspicion, but at present it was clouded with the humors of excitement and sensual desires. Owing to his physical and mental precocity he had been declared of marriageable age and was about to wed a beautiful princess of Judæa. She would arrive twenty days hence with her royal parents and a great retinue. They should be lodged in the island palace; nothing could be more opportune than its abandonment by Elissa.

Let her bring the furniture with her and all those beautiful works of art; when he had her safely locked up he would send them back. And the treasure of Sychæus! He smacked his thick lips and bellowed his delight. He had made penitential sacrifice to Baal-Melkart in all his temples, and knew he was forgiven.

He answered her letter immediately, assuring her of his brotherly affection, and that the western wing was

at her disposal. It would add to his happiness that his sister dwelt under the same roof with his Queen.

"You know, beloved Elissa," he wrote, "it was the decree of the people that you should not reign over them with me. With that unjust decree I had naught to do, for I was but a child at the time. Nor have I ever been able to move them since. But all honor shall be paid you in my palace, and I cherish the fond hope that in time to come you will forget this terrible calamity that has befallen you. Many princes will aspire to the hand of Elissa, beautiful beyond all women and dowered with fabulous treasure. I shall pour ashes upon my head when you depart from among us, but my blessing and no small part of my own treasure shall go with you.

"When all is in readiness, indite me another sweet letter and the fleet shall be placed at your disposal. I shall receive you at the gates of the city with all the pomp that becomes your royal state.

"Your Brother,

"PYGMALION, *King of Tyre.*"

Elissa would have laughed aloud at this tissue of lies and hypocrisy had she not forgotten how to laugh. As it was, she spat upon the letter.

"Fool! Oaf! Murdering villain!" she cried to Anna. "And he has the presumption to believe he can outwit Elissa! Thank Astarte he is about to marry, for that enhances my vengeance. What a poor stupid boy he

will look to the King of Judæa and all those ministers and courtiers from Jerusalem! His delight in his beautiful Rebekkah will turn to gall. When he leads her to the royal bedchamber his sly little eyes will watch her to note if she is secretly laughing at him. But no doubt she will only be thinking that she has been given the ugliest bridegroom in all Asia, or if he will not perhaps prove to be an ape in the robes of a King. I hope she scratches his eyes out."

"Oh, Elissa!" Anna was pale and trembling. "It may be that he suspects and devises a counterplot."

"He suspects nothing or he would have had the palace surrounded by this and the nobles arrested. Nor will it avail him if he suspects at the last moment. The Captain of the fleet is my friend, not his. Did I not send him a magnificent present by Tadmelak yesterday? And he has been promised that when my own fleets are built he shall be supreme in command. Who could stop him when the ships are loaded and all on board? Of what use if every man in Tyre cast himself into the canal and clung to the prows? They would be drowned for their pains. No, Pygmalion thinks only of the treasure. He is blind to aught else. We sail three days hence."

Elissa had no intention of taking any of the cumbersome furniture with her; but the statue of Astarte, the golden laver, the little golden tables, and all the

priceless works of art that had been collected by the Kings of Tyre, were carefully packed by the slaves to withstand a long voyage. They had a dim idea of her purpose, but they were devoted to a princess always kind when not in a temper, and often generous. Many a riotous night had they enjoyed with the sailors down on the quays at her expense. They would follow her to earth's end.

The treasure of Sychæus was hidden in a secret chamber under the gallery that ran between the eastern side of the palace and the city wall, and would be carried out in the last hour before dawn on the day of sailing. The nobles also had packed all that was portable and precious among their possessions and sent it at night to the fleet. Elissa wrote to Pygmalion that her friends wished to escort her to her new dwelling-place, and he replied graciously they should be entertained at a great feast in his palace.

[XII]

On the morning of her departure Elissa rose early and attended by Anna and her maidens went to the Temple of Astarte to make a last sacrifice. It stood near the great Temple of Baal-Melkart on the "Holy Island of Tyre," and its hangings were of white linen embroidered with blue stars, crescent and full moons, doves, and the fruits of the earth. The pillars were of silvered wood crowned with lighted pale blue vases in the shape of doves. Astarte sat in a chariot of silver drawn by lions, the head of a bull surmounting her own. Before her was the aërolite that had fallen from heaven in a past whose mists no man could penetrate, but long since consecrated to Astarte, and at her right was a silver altar where the priestesses, clad in blue linen robes, made sacrifice of doves, and the women of the city were wont to lay cakes and other offerings. Doves fluttered about the ceiling or rested on the effigies of themselves. One, on this fair historic morning, was perched on the head of the bull. The sound of flutes came from an inner chamber and mingled sweetly with the cooing of the doves.

No room in all the world was more pure and ex-

quisite in appearance than this Temple of Astarte and none had witnessed more licentious orgies. It was an act of worship for women to take casual lovers before that silver altar wrought in the form of doves, and frequent was the tribute to Astarte. Even brides, married against their will, hastened to that protecting roof to meet the man of their choice. And many women who had known one man too long. Others yielded to a religious frenzy only, but hardly a day passed that the Queen of love, increase, and fecundity was not given her due. All Temple women were prostitutes, and by no means dishonored. The nights were often one long revel of love and the Temple crowded and shameless.

Elissa accepted this phase of her religion as a matter of course, although she withheld from her beloved goddess this particular form of homage; and Anna was a congenital old maid with a secret and intense dislike of men. Both sought an hour when the Temple was as innocent as it looked.

Elissa made a sign and the High Priestess lit a fire on the altar and dropped a brace of doves into the flames. All prostrated themselves, then stood with palms upraised and chanted the invocation. When the rite was finished Elissa waved her hand imperiously and the others withdrew, leaving her alone in the Temple.

She mounted the aërolite and once more raised her hands to the goddess.

"O Ashteroth," she pleaded, "listen not only to my prayer, but to my vow. May thy blessing go with me and may I found a city that shall be greater than Tyre, or any city ruled by men. In ages to come may it inspire the hearts of all men who dwell beyond its walls with terror of its might. When I have gone down into the silence to dwell behind the dusky gates of the nether world forevermore, grant that knowledge be given me that it casts its shadow over the world and that all tremble at its name. For I have suffered, O Astarte, as no woman has suffered before, and it is just that this poor compensation be eternal.

"And this is my vow, O Face-of-Baal, goddess of heaven and earth, goddess of the moon and the stars, of love, of fecundity and plenty: to Sychæus I will ever be faithful, and no man shall know me again. May age not dim my love, nor his image fade. I, Elissa, daughter of Mattan, and wife of the High Priest of Baal in Tyre, pray in this sacred Temple of Astarte that my body shall never again know the torments of youth, and vow that my arms shall be empty forevermore."

Her soul was filled with exaltation. Peace descended upon her. Through the white mists in her brain she saw a responsive and beneficent gleam in the great sapphires set slantwise in the eye-sockets of the goddess. With high head and shining eyes she went forth to her destiny.

[XIII]

The fleet rode at anchor in the canal, its prows pointed to the north, for Abbas, the Captain, on a plausible pretext, had taken it to the Egyptian Harbor the day before; to turn in that narrow stream would be impossible, and what reason for sailing out into the Mediterranean with the gates of the land city but half a mile away?

On the deck of the flagship and on the bireme just behind were fifty immense and bulging sacks, and over them stood four officers of the King's Guard, for they were supposed to contain the treasure of Sychæus. Pygmalion may have been in total darkness as to his sister's purpose, but he feared he knew not what, and had given orders to his men not to take their eyes from that treasure until it was safe in his coffers.

But those sacks under which the palace slaves had staggered at the last moment were filled with sand and rocks. The treasure of Sychæus lay at the feet of many lower tiers of oarsmen, innocently reposing as ballast.

The decks of some twenty of the other ships were

crowded with the nobles and their families, and there was high chattering among the women. They had been told in strict confidence by their husbands that they were to go, not to a banquet in the palace of Pygmalion, but on a visit to Cyprus. They were invited, with their children and personal slaves, by the Princess Elissa, to escort her to that famous island, whither she was bound on important business of her own. This meager information had been vouchsafed them that they might take their wardrobes with them and have one grievance the less. They had embarked with delight, although somewhat apprehensive as to the temper of Pygmalion, and speculated volubly to one another on the temerity of the Captain. But, after all, that was the affair of men, and they would visit the great and wealthy island of Cyprus! It was the first excursion any of them had taken by land or sea, and they would return in time for the marriage festivities.

The silver anchors were pulled up. The purple sails, broidered in Egypt, swelled in a strong south wind. The rowers as one man bent to their oars. The island people, a gorgeous mass of color, lined the shores of the canal and waved farewell to their princess, who stood straight and proud in front of a purple awning. She wore a violet robe stiff with gold broidery and a small diadem on her head. Her long unbound hair shone like burning gold in the sun. Her skin had regained its luminous whiteness, her long black eyes were clear

and brilliant, and they told one another she had never looked as beautiful.

Some wept, not only to see her go from among them, but in sympathy for her bereavement. The men uttered hearty cheers, and the women cried, "Elissa! Elissa! Tarry not too long, but return to us." The merchants, even while cheering, fixed their greedy eyes on the bulging sacks. They had little doubt of Pygmalion's purpose, for they knew what they would have done in his place, and they gloated on the thought of the inestimable wealth that would add to the glory and the wealth of Tyre; for the King and Tyre were one.

Elissa paid them no heed beyond a gracious bend of her head. She was looking her last upon the lofty beauty of her city, a city she would never see again. She no longer loved it, for to-day it was but the symbol of her brother's murderous might, and no stone in its temples was harder than her heart. Could she have brought it crashing down on Pygmalion she would have worked her will without a qualm—providing he could have lived for long years under the ruins. No quick and painless death for him! She knew that the prophets of Israel—inspired no doubt by envy—had predicted its downfall; for no city so arrogant in its wealth and so bent upon riches alone could be good in the eyes of Jehovah. The time would come when it would be "broken by the seas in the depths of the waters."

Well, let the sea or the quaking earth receive it when

the hour was come, even as it had come to Ur and other great cities of antiquity once as mighty as Tyre. If it came in her time she would be far away and either indifferent to its fate or exultant, but to-day she was willing to pay a last tribute to its beauty. And she would never rest until her own city was even more beautiful, not only in her eyes, but in the eyes of all Europe and Asia.

Tadmelak, who stood near, saw her eyes flash and the ghost of a smile flit over her cold features. He dared not ask her of what she was thinking, but he knew, alas, that it was not of him. Nevertheless, he smiled, and his own eyes flashed. Time and distance and many changes would dim the memory of Sychæus, and her thoughts turn to love again. And he would be ever at her side!

The long line of biremes, looking like one in the narrow canal, despite their figureheads of dwarfed gods, sailed past the quays and out of the Sidonian Harbor, also crowded, and thence into the Mediterranean. But it described no curve to the left of the island nor to the channel that washed the mainland, and one of the King's officers called out a protest.

"Are you sailing for Cyprus?" he demanded with heavy sarcasm. "We should have turned before this, and the King awaits us at the gates."

Elissa, whose eyes had wandered toward that pale

blue cloud on the surface of the sea, turned and annihilated him with a look.

"The Captain is under my orders," she said in a voice that cut the air between them like a sword. "I go first to make oblation to the shade of my Lord Sychæus, and the wide sea shall receive it. Hold your peace."

The man exchanged uneasy glances with his fellows, but dared not protest further. He knew majesty when he saw it, and felt more awe of this pale girl with her high head and imperial eye than he had ever known in the presence of Pygmalion. And, after all, the King had not forbidden the sacrifice, but placed the fleet at her disposal with many sounding words.

The Captain announced that it was impossible to stop until the wind had fallen, and they sailed briskly past the mainland, which Elissa for the first time saw in the full sweep of its grandeur and its unparalleled variety; private barges rarely adventured far from harbor, and the southern waters were the favorite resort of pleasure seekers both of island and mainland.

Elissa sighed as she reflected there was probably no coast of Africa as beautiful as this, and that neither her will nor her riches could change the face of Nature. There was snow on the high peaks of Lebanon, and the forests on her rugged sides shimmered with the greens of a thousand million glossy leaves. Here and there were the ruins of rude temples and statues, for

the Phœnicians of old had worshiped the mountains as gods. Sharp promontories sprang from Lebanon straight into the sea where the plain was at its narrowest, their heights crowned with walled cities, quiet harbors at the base. Sidon, "First-born of Canaan," and once as famous as Tyre, now depending upon her factories for what wealth she had, looked like a monster jewel of many facets flashing in the sun. Turbulent rivers, tumbling down the rocks of wild and magnificent gorges, rushed over the plain to the calm waters of the sea. Little villages, gayly painted, nestled among the corn and the orchards. The fruit was ripe in the trees, and the leaves of the olives shone like pure silver. The sands of the shore were as white as the snow high above, roses bloomed in a riot of color, and everywhere were the beautiful maritime pines and the palms. Islands, covered with the same rich growth, lay close to the shore. Little waves breaking into foam beat against the cliffs.

On the lower hills were the tombs of the departed: men of Phœnicia, who had been great or humble in their day, and the women who had loved them. Elissa turned her head toward Cyprus.

The wind fell. The Captain blew a blast of his trumpet. The sailors, obeying the preconcerted signal, circled about until they surrounded the two foremost ships, whose decks suddenly swarmed with Elissa's slaves.

She left the shade of the awning and mounting a bench of boxwood inlaid with ivory lifted the scepter she had concealed in her robe. The diamond on its tip flashed blindingly in the sun. She raised her voice and her clear bell-like tones rang over the water.

"Men of Tyre, you behold one who is no longer Elissa, a mere princess and subject to Pygmalion, unlawfully ordained to reign alone. You behold your Queen; and as I go forth a wanderer, my name henceforth shall be Dido, a name that in time to come will live when Pygmalion is forgotten, for Astarte has given me counsel and promise. I go to found a great city on the African shore, and the meanest sailor among you shall play his part in the building of that city and meet with ample reward. As for you"—her contemptuous gaze rested for a moment on the bulging eyes of the King's Guard—"you will either go with me in submission or be returned to Tyre from Cyprus; and if you dare to protest at that which I am about to do you will be thrown by my slaves into the sea. Remain quiet as you are bidden and no harm shall befall you. Throw your daggers to the deck."

They were only four and they were surrounded by the menacing eyes of those stalwart slaves. They dropped their daggers and bowed their heads in sullen acquiescence.

But they jerked them up at her next words.

"And now, O Sychæus, my lord foully murdered, I

make my last oblation to your beloved shade." Her arms were raised, her face lit with exaltation. "It is fitting that the treasure inherited from your fathers, and guarded by you so valiantly from an unworthy King, should follow you into the darkness. It is hateful to me, for without it my lord would be alive to-day, and I a happy wife, not a fugitive on the boundless seas. O Sychæus! Sychæus! Accept this last cold offering of thy Elissa, who is Elissa no more, and who has sworn vengeance upon thy enemies, and fidelity to thee as long as life shall last."

She made an imperious gesture and the slaves fell upon the sacks and began hurling them into the sea. There was a loud murmur, and cries of horrified astonishment from all not admitted to her confidence. One of the officers, recovering his assurance, shouted:

"Abbas! In the name of Pygmalion the King I command you to stop this outrage and return to Tyre!"

But the Captain smiled insolently, and Tadmelak's heavy hand came down on his shoulder. Neither he nor his companions made further protest. But what in the name of Baal would be their fate when they returned to Tyre? What a tale for the ears of a King panting for that treasure! And with not a ray of hope to hold out. Were that treasure existent, and Elissa's only crime the theft of the fleet, he might send in haste to his neighbors, borrow a few stout galleys, and himself pursue this "Queen" to Africa and strike terror

to the hearts of the Captain and all who had abetted her. But of what avail with the treasure in the bottom of the Mediterranean? Better they prostrate themselves before this woman whose greatness they recognized and vow themselves to her service.

One after another those sacks of "precious treasure" disappeared into the blue depths. The Captain sounded another blast and the ships pointed their prows toward Cyprus.

PART TWO

[I]

THEY sailed into the harbor of Kition, on the eastern side of the island, while the handsome Phœnician city still slept in the dawn. The greater part of Cyprus was one of the largest of the colonies, founded some two hundred years before, and as the land was rich in copper, gold, emeralds, and opals, as well as producing corn in abundance, it was a source of great wealth to Tyre. Other cities flourished on the southern and western coasts, but the north had been colonized by the Greeks, who, however, dwelt with the Phœnicians in amity.

The houses were built of wood from the abundant forests, but the temples were of stone roofed with copper.

The flagship beached. Tadmelak went on shore and inquired his way from the watch at the city gates to the dwelling of the High Priest of Baal. They had dared take none of the priests of Tyre into their confidence, for all had been jealous of Sychæus and rejoiced in his death; not one but would have betrayed

the enterprise to Pygmalion. But a High Priest they must have or there would be uneasiness if not rebellion among the sailors and pilots of the ships; and the nobles were equally devout.

Tadmelak knew the reputation of Belator, High Priest of Baal in Kition; an ambitious and discontented man who resented the power of the people on that democratic island. A High Priest should live in splendor, even as Sychæus in Tyre, but his house was no better than that of any wealthy merchant, and although his office was given due honor, for the colonists were as pious as their ancestors who had discovered the island, they saw no reason why a priest, supreme in his temple, should live in the state of a king.

His house, surrounded by a walled garden and orchard, lay outside the city, its red roof barely visible above a grove of palms. A peaceful setting for a peaceful man! thought Tadmelak grimly. Baal be thanked there is as little peace in this man's heart as in mine.

He knocked loudly with the hilt of his dagger on the stout door of the wall. And again and again, before he heard the sound of shuffling feet. It was still another moment before an old face peered round a half-opened door. Tadmelak pushed it wide without ceremony.

"I would speak with the Lord High Priest at once," he said in the voice of authority. "I have business with him that concerns him deeply. Conduct me to his presence."

"My Lord the High Priest sleeps," grumbled the old man, overawed nevertheless. "He returned late from the Temple of Baal."

But Tadmelak had already reached the open door of the house. "Summon him at once," he commanded. And the old man, still grumbling, led him across the court and showed him into a room on the right.

It was a large room, handsomely and luxuriously furnished. Tadmelak smiled. Belator had inherited a considerable fortune from his fathers, and it was evident that if the people would not build him a palace he consoled himself by gratifying his tastes.

He entered in a moment, a man of fine appearance and immense dignity, but his eyes were heavy with sleep, and resentful.

"What is this?" he demanded angrily. "What brings you to my house at this hour? And who are you to order my servant to disturb the High Priest of Baal?"

The Phœnicians despised the flowery phrases of the Israelites and Judæans; their words were few and direct; but they could be as diplomatic as any.

Tadmelak made a deep obeisance, and then looked at the offended dignitary with a pleasant smile, although his eyes were grave.

"I am Tadmelak, son of Hannibal, of the kingdom of Tyre, and my father was once your friend, O Belator, High Priest of Baal in Kition," he said suavely.

"And I have things of much moment to relate to you. Have I your august permission?"

Belator unbent and bade his guest seat himself, the while disposing his stately person in a massive chair opposite. He knew that great family of Tyre, and an ancestor of his own had married a daughter of the house.

"We are distantly related," he said graciously, "and your father has slept under this roof on his way to and from the golden island of Thasos. I lamented his death and respect his memory. I cannot do otherwise than welcome his son, even at such an—ah—before daylight. And I cannot but believe that a matter of some moment has brought you to Cyprus—although it is understood that Pygmalion has forbidden his nobles to travel."

"Pygmalion will issue no more orders to his nobles, save only those who are too ancient to travel," said Tadmelak grimly. "We have elected Elissa our Queen and we go to found a city on the northern shore of Africa, hard by Utica in Libya. At the order of the King, Sychæus, husband of Elissa by her father's decree, and High Priest of Baal-Melkart, was murdered before the altar in the Temple—that his treasure might pass into the hands of Pygmalion. But the treasure was hidden in the palace, and Pygmalion became a murderer for naught. That treasure, O Belator, and much beside, we have with us, and we shall build

a city and a fleet, and our commerce shall be as great as Tyre's. Elissa inherits all the genius of her fathers, and this Mattan knew when he decreed she should rule with Pygmalion. The men who have left their beloved homes in Tyre to share her fortunes will give her wise counsel. She has sent me to pray that Belator will go with us and officiate as High Priest in the new city. You shall have a great temple, and a palace that befits your state. In all things you shall be paid high honor, and sit at the table of the Queen. Riches shall be yours and supreme power over all priests in the city of Elissa—whom we now, at her command, call Dido the Queen."

And he told the story from the death of Sychæus to the entrance of the fleet into the harbor of Kition.

Belator had given vent to a loud exclamation of horror when told of the murder of a High Priest, but he listened intently to the rest of the narrative. He knew Elissa by reputation—who did not?—and a girl who could hoodwink Pygmalion, carry off sixty biremes loaded with treasure, a hundred nobles and their families, under his very nose, conceive such a daring and magnificent enterprise, must be born to a great destiny—under the smiling protection of Astarte! And this determined young man, who no doubt in due course would reign with her, would be a wise and fearless counselor. He was a keen judge of character.

He rose and paced the room thrice, then halted

abruptly. "I go to the Temple of Baal," he said. "Almost your words have persuaded me, but I must ask counsel of the god."

"But tarry not too long! The merchants will soon be abroad, and must guess naught of our purpose."

"They will not intercept us, for—does the god reply as I hope—I shall tell them that Pygmalion has summoned me to Tyre to take the office made vacant by the death of Sychæus. And that he has sent his sister the Princess Elissa, and all his nobles—to whose order they well know I belong—to escort me. The Temple is not far away."

For half an hour Tadmelak strode up and down the room, nervous and apprehensive. He knew that he had made a strong appeal to the ambition, the thwarted pride, and the vanity of the man, but he feared sober second thoughts. After all he was secure in his office in a city already built. He might fear too the future vengeance of Pygmalion, although pursuit was impossible until the commercial fleet returned to Tyre three years hence.

He heard a measured step in the courtyard; a moment later Belator stood before him. His arms were folded, his face serene and majestic.

"I prostrated myself before the altar of Baal and thought of naught else but of revering the god," he said with solemn pronouncement. "And I heard the voice of Baal murmuring in my ears. He bade me go

forth and do him honor on the African shore, and humiliate a King who profaned a temple of Baal with the blood of a High Priest. I have no choice but to accompany you and swear allegiance to Dido the Queen. I make but one condition: I shall be High Priest as long as I live, and my son and son's son shall serve after me. And so, until the end of time."

"Your conditions shall be granted, O Belator! I bring with me the Queen's authority to grant all you ask. But there is another thing that disturbs her, and to you I appeal for counsel, for I take no other man of Kition into my confidence. We dared not carry off any maidens, and sailors must have wives to keep them content. The time, alas, is short—"

Belator had already demonstrated that he was a quick-thinking Phœnician, as fearless and resourceful as those thousands of men who had adventured upon the seas and made their country great and famous. His thoughts flew like winged arrows toward any objective that would advantage himself.

He interrupted Tadmelak. "I shall send my slaves from house to house and order some eighty maidens of the people to go down to the shore and offer morning sacrifice to Astarte. They are her votaries and ever ready to fly to her altar. I would there were more, but Kition is not a large city and more than eighty I will not summon, for maidens of high degree may not be given to sailors. Assuredly we can stop at other

islands and take what we will—either by strategy or force."

"You have a master-mind, O Belator, and will be of incomparable service to the Queen in many and divers ways! We must sail two hours hence. Bring your family and portable treasure with you. I return to the Queen, who will rejoice and reward you as I have promised."

The maidens who had been summoned from their slumbers to a sheltered cove dedicated to Astarte, were induced, after the sacrifice, to board the fleet with Belator and his confused anxious family, under promise of receiving a smile from the famous Elissa. Their wails rang over the water as the ships were rowed swifty out of the harbor, and the wrath of the citizens of Kition, who had assembled on the quays, wondering but not doubting, availed them nothing.

[II]

Elissa, once more full of vital energy, asked the Captain twenty times a day when they would reach the African shore, and she find something better to do than pace the deck scanning the horizon. He answered patiently that if the wind favored them, and the fair weather held, the journey would take no more than twenty days from Cyprus. Allowance must also be made for pauses at the islands to provision the ships and give the sailors a night on shore. Sailors, unfortunately, were not slaves but well-paid seamen, and jealous of their rights.

Anna was mildly seasick and spent much of her time on the cushions under the awning, leaving Elissa to the company of Tadmelak and Phalas, another energetic young noble, connected with the royal families of Tyre and Sidon, and whose ancestor had founded the colony on Rhodes. Fortunately he was betrothed to a granddaughter of Meisor, and insensible to the potent femininity of Elissa, although passionate in support of Queen Dido; harmony reigned among the trio.

They spent long hours planning their unborn city, which was to be called Carthage (New Town), although, knowing nothing of the lay of the land, they were obliged to confine their imaginative efforts to the shape and size of the buildings. No doubt architects would be found in Utica. In deference to their elders they refrained from working out a form of government until all could meet in council. Dido, imperious of spirit as she was, and lusting for power, was far too shrewd to make any attempt to reduce her nobles to absolute subjection, wise enough to know that she needed the counsel of mature minds, feminine enough to flatter them even while subtly directing those minds to her own ends.

She was far from happy, and her old gayety of spirit was buried fathoms deep, but she was excited and expectant, and, despite her impatience, she found much to enjoy in the voyage.

They made their next stop at Rhodes, that "Isle of Roses," with its pine-clad mountains and illimitable vineyards, its gardens whose fragrance was wafted by the breeze across the harbor as the ships entered under full sail.

The sudden and unheralded arrival of the Tyrian fleet caused much excitement among the Rhodians, but no suspicion. Elissa, in full regalia, but minus her scepter, went on shore as Princess of Tyre, and explained to the chief magistrate, who had marched at

the head of the citizens down to the quay, that she was bound for the coast of Africa to found a new colony. What more natural? Too long a time had elapsed since Tyre had added to her possessions, and it occurred to no one that Pygmalion, far from instigating the venture, was dancing about his palace in impotent wrath. Young kings were notoriously ambitious, and they commended the son of Mattan for his desire to add to the power and prosperity of his kingdom.

Even had they been told the truth they would have been helpless, but Elissa had her reasons for winning their good will. The four officers of the King's Guard had vowed submission and would not betray her; they had no desire to be stranded on Rhodes, and she knew, moreover, they were now keenly interested in the undertaking. They too were brave and enterprising Phœnicians.

Elissa was entertained royally. The nobles and their families were comfortably housed and enjoyed their respite from cramped quarters to the full. The ships were quickly provisioned, but Elissa lingered for two days, and when the fleet finally sailed out of the harbor it was with the addition of eight stout galleys filled with Rhodians bent upon becoming colonists and achieving wealth and adventure on far-off shores. The sailors not already provided for, found "wives"

to their taste and either abducted or persuaded them to brave the terrors of the sea.

During this interval Elissa met Belator for the first time and confirmed the promises of Tadmelak. Nor did she ever make a deeper impression; an impression profoundly calculated, lest he change his mind and return to Cyprus. While subtly flattering him with appeals to his superior masculine intellect, she emanated a spirit so imperial, her words were so chosen as to instill the conviction of a mind gifted not only with high intelligence, but with caution, the wisdom that comes of long meditation, and a generous but calm sense of justice, that he went from that first private interview secure in the belief she would not only achieve the peak of her ambition but make the fortune of her subjects. Singular that so fascinating and beautiful a creature should be so free from the rashness of youth; a phenomenon due no doubt to her seven years' association with a High Priest.

At the great festival given in her honor she insisted that almost equal respect be paid to the future High Priest of Carthage. Grouped about her were her nobles—and their wives, anything but enthusiastic at the prospect of pioneering, but somewhat reconciled by the graciousness of their Queen and promises of high position at court.

She further cemented their loyalty by summoning them to her private chamber and giving them her

solemn vow that, as long as she lived and reigned, no children should be sacrificed to Baal in her city. One woman who was suckling an infant, fell on her knees and kissed the hem of her garment, while the others broke into loud acclaim, some weeping hysterically. Not one but had been haunted by the fear that if danger threatened the pilgrims in the unknown land whither they were bound, Baal must needs be propitiated with tender bodies and broken hearts.

Elissa, although quite sincere in her professed loathing of the age-old custom, would have abolished it in any case as a matter of policy. She was far too clever to underestimate the influence of women on their husbands and lovers and she wanted harmony and content in the difficult times to come. When those women left her they were her slaves as surely as if they had had rings in their lips.

Their next brief sojourn was at Crete, "Island of the Hundred Towers," where under the shade of Mount Ida, their numbers were increased by two hundred would-be colonists in their seaworthy galleys; their families would be sent for later.

Between Crete and Malta they had an exciting adventure. A fleet of pirate ships suddenly appeared on the horizon and gave them chase. There was no wind, and speed depended upon the muscular arms of the rowers, who bent grimly to their task. Three blasts of the Captain's trumpet brought the ships

into close formation, five abreast, those with the treasure and the nobles in the center. But all eyes were strained toward that ominous black mass descending upon them. The pirate ships were lightly built, and their sailors, roaring like the lions on Lebanon, inhumanly swift.

The women screamed and clung to their husbands or clutched their children in a desperate embrace. Not for this had they left the safety of their homes in Tyre!

Elissa stood on a bench, flanked by Tadmelak and Phalas with drawn swords. It is one of the phenomena of the human heart that a vital loss withers the roots of fear, and Elissa was fearless by nature. Moreover, she was serene in the awareness of her destiny. She regarded those fearsome black ships, looking like foul birds that had risen from the nether world to skim the deep in search of mortal prey, almost with indifference, yet with a not disagreeable thrill of excitement. She was an adventurer to her marrow, and this was the first moment of real danger she had encountered.

The din became terrific. The pirates, beating kettledrums, screamed like madmen, the Tyrian sailors shouted their defiance, women shrieked and children yelped. Anna threw herself face downward on the cushions and gave herself up for lost. She made up her mind that if those pirates boarded the flagship she

would seize Elissa in her arms and jump overboard. Better death a thousand times than violation by a barbarian.

The pirates held off for a time, hoping to strike terror into the hearts of the peaceful Phœnicians, and achieve an easy victory. They were new to the business and stupid withal, or they would have remembered the long record of those fleets of Phœnicia for determination and courage. Many a pirate menace had the Phœnicians beaten off with only the occasional loss of scattered ships. This was an unusually small fleet, however, and the pirate ships were almost equal in number.

The Tyrians showed no intention of surrendering, or of buying their lives with the deliverance of the treasure. They looked a formidable mass and were making good speed. The pirates lost no time by encircling the fleet but swooped down on the eastern line, brandishing rude but business-like weapons.

But their galleys were at a disadvantage with the higher biremes propelled by two banks of rowers. Biremes were always prepared for lawless attack, and from the elevated decks the sailors greeted these hairy naked ruffians with battle-axes, blazing torches of pitch-pine, and hot oil. Each pilot was in command of his ship, and when the younger nobles, including Pygmalion's deserters, sprang from boat to boat until they reached the weak point of attack, they obeyed

orders and used daggers and swords on the pirates attempting to swarm up the sides despite their warm reception. Several heads were sliced off. One of the sources of Tadmelak's wealth was a sword factory, for although the Phœnicians were all for peace, they supplied more war-like nations with the implements of battle. Not knowing what dangers might await them on the African shore, he had transferred a large consignment to the fleet under cover of night, and every noble had been given one in Cyprus. Those bright flashing blades, seen for the first time, those black heads bobbing on the water, shriveled the courage of the pirates. They scrambled back to their galleys, turned tail and raced away, pursued by the derisive cheers of the Tyrians.

"You have saved us, dear Tadmelak," said Elissa graciously, resting her hand lightly on his shoulder. "How shall I ever reward you?"

But he was a wise young man, and knew the time had not yet come to tell her.

[III]

They remained on Malta for three days, provisioning the ships, exercising their stiff legs among the orange groves, visiting the beautiful grottoes, and winning more adventurers to their cause. The Maltese were Phœnician in origin, and when told that the Princess Elissa intended to found no mere colony to rear factories for the benefit of Tyre, but that Carthage would be a great headquarters of commerce, with a fleet of between three and four hundred ships, and, in time to come, would plant colonies of her own, many were eager to follow her banner and advantage themselves. Besides their household goods they filled two galleys with mules, asses, and goats.

Elissa, when the fleet left the harbor and pointed directly for Libya, had one thousand and sixty subjects for her future kingdom, including the sailors (none more loyal, for they had enjoyed themselves at her expense in every port), and exclusive of young girls and boys, children and slaves. No doubt she would win many more from Utica and other Phœnician

cities on the African littoral, possibly from those on the Sicilian Isle opposite, for the city she purposed to build would offer far greater attractions both for pleasure and for individual gain than any colony existing merely to feed the prosperity of Tyre.

Priests from the several islands had joined the pioneers, cajoled by Belator, whose ambition dictated that he too begin his new career with a reasonable number of subordinates.

As soon as the fleet was under way all the new recruits were informed of the true purpose of the pilgrimage, and told the whole story of the flight of Dido from the brother who had murdered her husband. Loud was the excitement, but if any were in doubt as to the success of an expedition led by a woman, they were soothed by the assurance that the nobles she had carried off were the wise men of Tyre and would be the true rulers of Carthage. But there were many who hardly needed this encouragement. They had looked often upon "Queen Dido," with her high head and imperial eye, witnessed the deference of even the maturest of the nobles, and doubted if she would need men to guide her. She looked quite capable of driving her own chariot, and her kind smile and gracious manner inspired them with the belief that she would give due heed to individual rights. In a way she was at their mercy and far too intelligent to be blind to the fact. It would seem that she had the gift of winning

passionate loyalty, and did she recognize their independence as men, they were quite willing to give it without measure to a young and beautiful Queen. Their lives had been monotonous, and they felt a pleasurable excitement in this lively prospect of a new and possibly unique experience.

"I would start my city with two thousand subjects, at least," said Dido (she had forbidden even Anna to call her Elissa) to Tadmelak as they stood leaning over the rail watching the gentle waves race past them. She waved her hand in the direction of the mountainous mass of Sicily in the northwest, whose famous volcano was belching smoke and flame. "Would it not be wise to visit Egesta, Panormus, and Eryx before proceeding to Africa? I am told that Eryx has permitted some prince of Trojan blood to make himself King, but that matters little as he pays tribute to Tyre, and all his subjects are Phœnicians by blood. That fire mountain is far away and there would be no danger to our ships."

"You will have enough to do, O Queen, to house and feed those you have." Tadmelak never hesitated to express his honest opinion. "One thousand and sixty are a respectable beginning for any city, and we shall find black men without number to aid us in its building."

"But those black men have kings, whom I wish to impress. I would I had ten thousand ships to lead to the African shore!"

"Sixty biremes and twenty-two galleys will make a fair showing, and we know that King Iarbas of Libya is peacefully inclined, and friendly to the colonists. I shall visit him at once with an imposing retinue, a lump of gold from Ophir and a ruby from Ind, and hold out the promise of wine and trinkets to his subjects. If he fails to be impressed I have only to conduct him to your presence. Array yourself in your robes of state, scepter in hand, a flashing diadem on your head, and receive him seated on a dais surrounded by your court, Tyrian purple behind you. Ten thousand biremes would pale by contrast."

Dido laughed. "I'll not see him until I can receive him in a palace. A fine impression I should make sitting on a bench in a tent! No, the Lord Tadmelak must convince him that we have come to build a great city, which in no distant future will be a source of wealth to him as to ourselves. And that he will find ways of enjoying himself at the court of Dido. I wonder, do those Africans ever bathe?"

"Probably not. I have heard that their bodies are polished with rancid oil until they outshine the sun. But nothing could be worse than the smells of Tyre. Since my nostrils have been so long accustomed to this pure salt air I am filled with wonder that I never rebelled at the stifling odors of the murex—"

Dido interrupted him anxiously. "Where shall we

get our purple dyes? I am told that the murex is confined to the shores of Asia."

"We have enough raiment and hangings to last us for many years; and no doubt in time we shall establish commercial relations with Tyre."

Dido frowned. "Would that I never should hear that name again!" But her brows relaxed in a moment. She had all the hard common sense of her people, and no private hatreds of her own should interfere with the prosperity of her city. "It may be," she said. "Tyre could be useful to us in many ways. But that is in the future—when Pygmalion has learned it will advantage him to be on good terms with Carthage. He knows that if I had the wit to steal his sixty biremes and win his nobles to my cause, it will not be long before I have a fleet equal to his own, if not greater; and that I am quite capable of making war upon him if he doesn't behave himself. If he is too stupid to realize it his merchants will persuade him. They may hate me but they will prefer my friendship to war. Meanwhile, the great fleet when it is on its way back to Tyre will stop at the African coast for merchandise, and I shall come to an understanding with the pilots. They will bring me what I wish. The needlewomen of Sidon will care little into whose hands their work falls if it is well paid for. For that matter, we shall be even closer to Egypt—"

"I don't like that cloud in the west," said Tadmelak

abruptly. "We have had fair weather so far, but the Captain tells me that storms in this region are often sudden and violent."

Dido scowled at the rolling masses of black cloud, suddenly reft with lightning, and rising on great wings to the sun. Why could she not command the elements even as Astarte had taught her to command men? She must reach the African shore with her proud little fleet intact and under full sail.

The Captain and the pilots shouted their orders. The sails were reefed, the awnings taken down, and the passengers commanded to throw themselves face downward on the decks, press their feet against the railing, and cover their heads with cushions. A posture extremely distasteful to Dido, and she stood erect and defiant until Tadmelak lifted her feet from under her without ceremony and laid her ignominiously on her stomach.

She checked an angry outburst, shrugged, and settled herself as comfortably as might be. After all she enjoyed outwitting men, and if there was but one way to get the best of this roaring storm-god so be it. Anna rolled over beside her, less terrified than she had been of the pirates, and she and Tadmelak joined arms in pressing their common idol firmly to the deck.

The storm was upon them in another moment. The waves rose and dashed over the ships, rain descended and turned into hail, pelting them mercilessly. The

screams of women, the wailing of children, the braying of asses, beat feebly against the loud roar of the tempest. The ships rocked and pitched, stood on end, only to plunge a moment later as if heading for the depths of the sea. Lightning flashed, thunder roared. All who were not too seasick to care believed their doom was upon them.

But not Dido. Not for a moment did she lose faith in her star. While Anna, between spasms of retching, prayed vigorously to Astarte, the sterner stuff of which her sister was made found a wild delight in the battle of the elements. When the hail ceased she pushed her head from under the cushion and watched the narrow golden blades fork in and out of the turbulent purple masses that rolled as if on wheels so close above their heads. In that moment she forgot her sorrows, even Sychæus. Something seemed loosed within her, fighting to spring upward and find comradeship in the storm. It was no time for reflection, but vague questions flitted over her mind. Had she ever known a man of her own stature? Were there secret chambers in her soul that no one had ever entered? Had her one experience of love been but that of a young girl for the one man who had embraced her? Did a god ride the storm and shout his imperious summons?

She lifted her head, and her body made a sudden free movement as if to spring. But Tadmelak's arm was like an iron bar, and he pushed her face down with

the cushion. She fell strangely to weeping. That something within her, so divine, mysterious, ecstatic, crackled like a withered leaf. Life was flat and colorless. She cared not whether she ever reached Africa, or plunged into the depths of the sea. That moment of ecstasy was gone, never to return. She hated life and spat upon the thought of Carthage.

The storm passed as quickly as it had come, although the waves were still high and restless. The sun rode serenely in the dark blue sea of the sky.

The Captain mounted a bench and scanned his fleet anxiously, counting aloud. But his sixty biremes, which had drawn well apart before the storm broke, were still pursuing their uneasy course. As far as he could see, the galleys were also above water, although he learned afterward that a number of the beasts had been washed overboard.

Dido's one thousand and sixty subjects had lived out the storm.

[IV]

THERE was no trace of tears on Dido's cheeks when Tadmelak lifted her to her feet, but she retired to the seclusion of the awning and sat in sullen silence for the rest of the day. Anna had set up a little statue of Astarte, and after an hour's homage to the goddess who had delivered them from the perils of the deep, she rose and looked at her sister's brooding face.

"You too should render thanks, dear Elissa—"

"I have told you not to call me Elissa," snapped Dido.

"I have called you Elissa for more than twenty years, and it is not to be expected that I shall forget the habit of a lifetime in a moment," retorted Anna with dignity. "But what ails you, dear one?"

"I have a headache. Who would not after being pitched about in a shrieking storm—and the stench of vomit was worse than the murex. I am sure that Tadmelak was seasick," she added viciously.

"He was not!" Tadmelak was one of the few men Anna liked and trusted, and she shared his hopes.

Elissa needed a husband if any woman ever did. Sychæus was dead. Why mourn for what was past recall? She had forgotten the vow.

"How do you know? You were too sick yourself to notice."

"I know because he was not leek-green like the others. But what of that? Will you not give thanks to Astarte?"

"No, I will not. When I am in the mood I will pray to her and not before."

Anna sighed, but she knew when to let Elissa alone. She made herself a comfortable bed with the cushions and went to sleep.

Dido herself slept soundly that night, and as she watched the sharp golden rays of the sun rise above the calm blue waters she smiled at her mood of yesterday. Already that strange brief moment was a fading memory. But she turned her head away. She disliked the rising sun, for it reminded her of the statue of Baal in the Temple. A fine friend he had been to the High Priest who had worshiped and served him! If she had her will she would rear no temple to him in her city. But again her private animosities were not to be countenanced. Not one but several temples must be erected to that hateful god would she keep the loyalty of her subjects.

It was her habit upon awakening to dwell for a time on the thought of Sychæus before praying to Astarte.

But this morning her mind wandered. His mental image, so firmly enthroned in her memory, was less vivid than usual. And, too, her spirit felt lighter than since he had fallen in the Temple. . . . It was as if she heard a stone rolling . . . lightly . . . lightly . . . down hill. . . .

"Sychæus! Sychæus!" She cast a swift glance at her sister, but Anna was still deep in sleep.

She ran over and knelt to Astarte, and there was an accent of alarm in her whispered prayer. "Let me not—let me not—no, never! never! Give me back the face of my lord! Let him fill my heart and my mind as ever. I have seen no man who means aught to me. Why should his image fade? I vow once more I will be faithful to him until I go down into the silence and am mute."

Astarte answered her prayer. Sychæus smiled at her from his throne. A sad, wise, rather elderly smile that made her long to weep.

But she sprang to her feet and raised her arms to a low dark line on the southern horizon which she knew to be Africa. The heaviness had not returned to her spirit, the past receded, that first vision of Africa made her very marrow tingle. There lay her real destiny.

On the following afternoon they sailed into the artificial harbor of Utica, a city of fair size on the river Bagradas, and lying peacefully under the shadow of steep hills covered with palms. As usual the citizens

crowded to the quays, agog with curiosity. Belator, and Meisor who had braved the journey despite his age, as much for the sake of his fatherless grandchildren as for Elissa's—were, by the order of the Queen, the first to leave the ships and approach the two Shophetim, or chief magistrates. They asked that all who had accompanied them on a perilous journey be granted permission to go at once to the temples to offer sacrifice to Baal and Astarte for delivering them safely from pirates and storms. A full explanation of their purpose in visiting the distinguished city of Utica would be given as soon as the ceremony of sacrifice and prayer was over. But they feared the vengeance of god and goddess were their homage too long delayed.

Permission was granted with reserve but some graciousness. Doves, they were informed, were always in the Temple of Astarte. Sheep would be sent at once to the Temple of Baal.

No mention had been made of Dido, but when a girl of exceeding beauty, robed in Tyrian purple broidered with gold, a sparkling diadem on her lofty head, a scepter in her hand, her mass of golden hair looped with chains of diamonds, had descended from the flagship, and, looking to neither right nor left, but with eyes filled with the light of religious exaltation, trod lightly behind the two ambassadors as they followed the High Priest of Utica to the temples, there was a low astounded murmur, and for the moment they

hardly glanced at the horde of men and women, high-born and low, who poured from the ships in their eagerness to feel land under their feet once more and offer up thanks that the journey and its perils were over.

Curiosity gave way to uneasiness, however, as the last of that menacing throng disappeared at the end of the street. The elder of the Shophetim frowned and pulled at his beard.

"What can be the meaning of this sudden descent upon us of sixty Tyrian biremes and all those galleys?" he demanded. "Surely the young Pygmalion can have no hostile design upon a colony that sends tribute to Baal in Tyre, and engages in lucrative traffic with the mother city twice in every three years. But what else can it mean, and who is that woman, crowned and sceptered?"

"She is more beautiful than the sun and the moon and the stars!" cried a younger man with enthusiasm. "There was nothing hostile in her bearing."

"True," said the magistrate. "And she can be no other than the Princess Elissa, daughter of Mattan, who decreed she should reign with Pygmalion, but whose will was set aside by the people. That High Priest no doubt is her husband, the Lord Sychæus. I begin to see light."

"What do you mean?" They crowded about him. "Does she come to rule here in Utica? We want no

Queen, even one as fair as she. Who among us would exchange our independence as colonists even to dwell in Tyre?"

"No, I do not think she comes with any such purpose. Nor does she come to take refuge among us, or she would have entered the city more humbly, not like a Queen on a royal progress. She comes—or I have lost my wit to put two and two together—to found a colony of her own. We shall hear a strange tale before the day is over. I go now to receive her in the Hall of Council when she has finished her sacrifice. The rest of you must make ready to receive all those nobles and their families into your houses, and entertain them as befits their station. Whoever they are, their numbers are formidable, and they must be treated with respect. The humbler of our people are accustomed to lodge the sailors of the great fleet, and will make much of these. Disperse at once."

An hour later Dido stood in the Hall of Council facing the two Shophetim and flanked by Belator and all her nobles. The large chamber was crowded to the doors with curious and excited citizens, but there was no other woman present. The women of Utica had assembled before the portals of the Temple of Astarte offering hospitality, and even Anna had hastened to accept. The earth still rolled under her feet, and she longed for the old luxuries of bath, delicate food, and a comfortable bed.

Dido, when in her imperial mood, gave the impression of being a tall woman, although but five feet four inches in height. But this was merely a secondary impression, for her beauty was always dazzling. In her rich husky voice she told her story briefly. Pygmalion had murdered her husband. She had appropriated the fleet and loaded it with her treasure, which was beyond reckoning. The nobles had followed her, having long since elected her their Queen. Several hundred men of all degrees, from Cyprus, Rhodes, Crete, and Malta, had joined the fleet and declared themselves her faithful subjects. It was her purpose to found, not a colony, but a kingdom, as near to Utica as might be; for she hoped to live with this just and beautiful city in amity, to the advantage of both. Then she folded her arms, the scepter drooping from her hand, and sweetly asked their advice.

The Shophetim were stunned by her story, and they were as deeply impressed by her majesty and her beauty. They had gasped at her ruse to delude the officers of Pygmalion by throwing the sacks of sand overboard, and despite their bemused faculties came swiftly to the conclusion that the fewer chances they gave her to outwit them the better. An implacable foe would this woman be, her friendship greatly to be desired. She was born to rule, and they had heard of the treasure of Sychæus. True, by harboring and abetting her they might incur the wrath of Pygmalion, but he

was helpless for three years to come, and by that time no doubt she would have made her peace with him.

They conferred together, and then Badbaal, the elder, spoke.

"We welcome you to the Libyan shore, O Dido of Tyre, and, in sympathy for your misfortunes, we offer you our friendship and all aid. Not far from Utica is a large peninsula, with a fertile plain, close upon the Gulf of Tunes, greatest of natural harbors. But like our own land, for which we pay a yearly tribute, it is in the realm of King Iarbas, and to him you must appeal. If you will designate your ambassadors I shall send them on horse, accompanied by an interpreter and a bodyguard, to his capital. And now, O Queen, I would conduct you to my house, that you may rest and refresh yourself with the bath, and, in the cool of the evening, receive many of my friends at a banquet."

And Dido walked from the Chamber with high head and a smile on her lips for the men of Utica who cheered her. Again she had conquered.

[V]

TADMELAK, Phalas, Belator, and Meisor, arrayed in Tyrian purple and Egyptian red, with ten slaves, and accompanied by a regiment of horse from the little army Utica kept for defense against marauding tribes, and one of its Generals, set out on the following morning for the capital of Iarbas, King of Libya: an immense plateau lying between the northern littoral and the Atlas mountains, rising in terraces to the range. He was a mighty monarch and a tyrant, but, like his fathers, not averse from leasing goodly portions of land on the coast to Phœnicians, provided they were prompt with their yearly tribute and made no attempt to penetrate the interior. He despised them, but their looms supplied him with gorgeous raiment and his women with gewgaws, besides delicacies for his larder and weapons for his army. He enjoyed trafficking, and was always on hand to drive a hard bargain when the Tyrian fleet put into the harbors of the Phœnician cities that lay scattered along four hundred miles of coast.

His capital was of enormous size but rude in architec-

ture and incredibly dirty. Such an assortment of smells, each more evil than the one before, had never greeted the not too sensitive olfactories of the Tyrians. They plunged their noses into their perfume jars, nor removed them until they were within the walls of the huge structure that was citadel and palace in one.

The General had gone on ahead to announce the embassy with due ceremony, for a King must have time to get on his throne. The gates were open to them, and they traversed court after court lined with gigantic naked blacks, their spears glittering in the sun, before they entered the presence.

Iarbas received them seated on a throne upheld by ivory lions at the end of a vast room, also lined with naked men, whose spears struck the floor with a resounding crash.

"An amiable-looking creature," muttered Tadmelak. "He looks as if he would like to eat us alive."

Iarbas, in truth, happened to be in an exceedingly bad humor, for he had just strangled his favorite wife in a fit of temper. His big black face scowled at the approaching ambassadors under a feathered headdress, which added to his formidable appearance. He wore nothing else but a mantle of cloth of gold caught about his bull-like neck with a jeweled ornament but spread over the back of the throne; no doubt because the atmosphere in the room was torrid. It was also

permeated with rancid oil and other contributions from human padding. But the Tyrians dared not produce their alabaster bottles.

He was an unusually handsome man despite his scowl and the rivulets of sweat that ran down his face, for his features were bold and well cut, and his frame, little short of seven feet, admirably proportioned. He claimed, indeed, to have been fathered by the great god Hammon.

The ambassadors, followed by their slaves and the soldiers of Utica, walked down the long room in a silence that seemed portentous and sinister as the echoes of the spears on the stone floor died away. They had been instructed by the General, and prostrated themselves when they reached the foot of the throne, then rose and summoned all their dignity, although they were divided between a desire to laugh and to turn their backs and walk out. The Phœnicians were not an intellectual race, but they were of an inordinate cleverness and highly civilized, fully aware of their supreme importance in the world. This King might be a personage in Africa, and the son of a god as black as himself, but they despised him as a barbarian of the lowest order and it went against the grain to humble themselves before him.

Iarbas growled out a question. Tadmelak stepped forward and stated the purpose of the mission. Dido,

sister of the King of Tyre, had come to found another city on the Libyan coast, and craved permission to lease the peninsula a hundred and seventy stades east of Utica. One thousand and sixty subjects had come with her, and she was wealthy enough to pay whatever tithe he thought fit to ask.

The General acted as interpreter.

The King listened with no relaxation of his frowning brows.

"What presents have they brought me?" he demanded.

Tadmelak motioned to two of the still prostrate slaves, and they shuffled forward on their knees, bearing between them a large urn of Egyptian faïence. From it the General lifted the offerings one by one, and the King's eyes began to glisten. There was a great polished ball of gold of Ophir, a ruby as large as an egg, carved by the metallurgists of Tyre, an emerald set in electron, three silver vases elaborately chased, and a vessel of gold studded with beryl, jasper, and topaz.

The King's eyes glittered and he smacked his lips as he fingered the royal gifts, then gathered them into his capacious lap.

"And this Dido?" he asked. "Why did she not come in person to prostrate herself before the god-born of Libya and sue for his favor?"

"She is indisposed, O King, after a long and toilsome

journey," replied Tadmelak. It was on the tip of his tongue to add that in civilized countries a monarch remained at home where he belonged when dispatching embassies to a neighboring potentate, but he thought it wise to refrain.

"Is she beautiful?" asked Iarbas greedily. "And young?"

Tadmelak answered evasively and with well assumed indifference.

"She is still young, O King, and all women when young are fair to look upon—if happy. But Dido still mourns the death of her husband."

Iarbas laughed coarsely. "If she is young she will choose another." He added several remarks the General wisely left untranslated.

There ensued a silence during which the autocrat appeared to ruminate. He spoke at last and with no increase of amiability.

"That harbor is the grandest among my possessions. Why should I deliver it into the hands of the Phœnicians? They already have enough of Libya."

"Tell him," said Tadmelak, "that if he withholds it we shall sail to-morrow for the Sicilian Isle. Tell him also of the vast advantages in days to come of a great city, not a mere colony, on the edge of his empire. We come in peace, and he knows well the Phœnicians are not a war-like race. We would fain remain here after our long journey, and because the Queen wished it

from the first, but we are not stranded on his coast. We have a fleet of sixty biremes that will waft us quickly to more hospitable shores."

The King scowled again, and bit his great purple lips. He was torn between policy and a desire to vent his spite on these white men, since he could think of no excuse to strangle or chop off the heads of any of his subjects. Temper got the better of him, and he had a vein of sardonic humor.

"Tell them," he shouted, "that this Queen of theirs may have as much land as she can cover with the hide of an ox." And he laughed uproariously.

Tadmelak kept his temper. "Is that his last word?" he asked.

It was. There was nothing left but to back out from the presence.

[VI]

A HOUSE had been placed at Dido's disposal, and hither all her chests were brought. The tire-maidens took her garments to the roof to air, for they reeked of the perfumes, too heavy for common use, that had protected them from moths. The tables and works of art were not unpacked, but piled in an inner court. The treasure was hidden in an upper chamber, where slaves watched over it day and night.

Dido, during the three days' absence of her ambassadors, held long consultations with her nobles and the two Shophetim. A form of government must be decided upon for the new city. It was finally agreed that Dido as Queen must reign supreme, and would appoint her ministers. They could do no better than improve upon what monarchies they knew of by taking hints from a city as successful in its government as Utica: two Shophetim would be elected by the people as executive magistrates, as well as those of lesser degree. Meisor and the middle-aged nobles should constitute a Council of Elders, and officiate in an upper house, to

which all points of law would be referred. The Queen's counselors, or ministers, would be twelve in number. The younger men would have duties assigned them later.

Abbas, although born in the merchant class, was remotely connected with the noble family of Meisor, and this saving grace, added to his inestimable services, was an excuse for admitting him to these impromptu boards of council. Dido conferred upon him the title of General, and bade him set natives as speedily as might be to building a fleet of not less than three hundred ships. No time must be lost in entering into commercial relations with all cities founded by Phœnicians. In due course this commerce would extend to the Asiatic shores.

It was a happy fortune that left Abbas in charge of the home fleet that year, and Pygmalion was its instrument. He was no favorite of the young King, who chanced to be in a spiteful mood when he had petitioned to go out with the great fleet.

A little wiry man, energetic, brave, resourceful, and ambitious for wealth and power, but loyal by nature, and passionately devoted to this beautiful young Queen whom he had rescued and led triumphantly to the end of her journey, he bade fair to be one of the most useful and valuable of her subjects.

Tadmelak was a young man, but his services too had been great. Abbas may have braved the wrath of

the King and piloted them safely across the Mediterranean, but he had been won over by Tadmelak. Without that young nobleman's resource and initiative even Dido would have been helpless. It was unanimously agreed that he should be the first of her ministers, and General of the land forces.

"Tadmelak, like myself, will ever seek counsel of wiser heads in time of trial, and even in matters of state," announced Dido to her nobles with an ingratiating smile. "Each of you has his special wisdom, and that we all know. But I gave him my word, when I first sought his influence with the Lord Sychæus, and never shall I break my word to one of my faithful subjects."

"He is a man old for his years," said Aslartus, his cousin but considerably the elder. "He was the constant companion of Hannibal, his father, the wisest Counselor of Mattan. And he had always longed for action. I am impatient for his return that we may lay the foundations of your city, O Queen."

"I hope he does not bring ill news," said Badbaal, with a sudden lapse into gloom. "Iarbas is a man of uncertain moods."

"I fear not," said Dido proudly. "Astarte watches over me."

But great was her wrath and dismay when she received the embassy on the following morning.

Hot, weary, disheveled, they prostrated themselves

before her, and then stood with bowed heads. Tadmelak motioned to Belator to speak. Another must give the dire tidings to the Queen, not he.

For a moment Dido refused to credit the evidence of her ears. This news was incredible. She forgot that misfortune had ever visited her before. That *she* should be thwarted, her royal desires treated with disdain! And by a man blacker than any of her slaves!

"I'll not believe it!" she cried furiously. "That barbarian refuses to lease me the land for my kingdom? What difference can it make to him? He lives far away. He has no ships. What can that harbor mean to him?"

"I think he was in a bad humor," ventured Tadmelak. "He hated us, it was plain to see. He kept our presents—and told us to tell you—" His voice faltered, died in a mumble.

"Told you what?" Dido's face was crimson, her own voice high and shrill. "Did he dare to send me an added insult? And you let him keep those precious metals and jewels?"

"We were surrounded by hundreds of armed blacks, O Dido—"

"What was his message?"

But once more Tadmelak refused to speak. Belator resumed the shameful tale. "He said, O Queen, that you might have as much of his land as you could cover with the hide of an ox."

Dido sprang to her feet, her face convulsed, her eyes darting fire. "Begone! Leave my presence! I never want to see any of you again! Cowards! Poltroons! And you call yourselves men! You stood there humbly and heard your Queen insulted when you could have run him through with your swords—"

"We should have done you no service, dear child," interrupted Meisor mildly. "It would have meant the death of all who followed you from Tyre, possibly the destruction of Utica did she seek to protect her guests—"

"Go! Go!! Go!!!"

The unhappy embassy retreated without the formality of prostrating themselves. Dido slammed the door behind them and ran up and down the room uttering cries of fury, hurled chairs and tables out of her way, and tore a hanging from the wall. She had indulged in a tantrum when the people deposed her, and in a good many since, but they were to this as the breeze is to the whirlwind. She screamed and raved, and when Anna, terrified by the noise, ran in she flung a glass candlestick at her. Anna fled to her bedchamber and locked the door.

But reaction ever follows upon a fit of temper, and Dido finally sank exhausted on a pile of cushions. Her breath came in hard gasps, and she pressed a hand against her laboring chest; but her mind was suddenly clear and cold.

She must outwit this barbarian. But how? how? Phalas had managed to interpolate there were other countries besides Africa. But she would have none of them. The Sicilian Isle? She had had enough of islands. Hispania? Gaul? She had no wish to live on that wild Atlantic shore. She had set her heart on Africa and in Africa she would remain. And on that particular harbor would she build her city. What she wanted she would have. And she would outwit that loathsome black.

But how? *How?*

She leaned her elbows on her knees and buried her hands in her hair, although she no longer felt any disposition to pull it out by the roots. Nor was she moved to pray to Astarte for guidance. It had escaped her observation, but her quick active brain sufficed in moments of crisis. From generosity or policy, however, she generally gave the goddess credit later.

Half an hour had passed before she raised her head. Her face was mocking but serene. She smoothed her hair, shook out her disordered garment, and set the room in what order she could.

She opened the door, and the cowering slaves in the court fell on their faces and shook from head to foot.

"Summon the Lords Tadmelak, Belator, Meisor, and Phalas," she commanded; and the slaves tumbled over one another in their haste to obey her.

The four ambassadors were routed out of their

beds, into which they had fallen without disrobing, and met at the door of her house. They were angry and resentful, for they had been unjustly treated by one for whom they had risked life and fortune. Even Tadmelak forgot he had ever loved that woman. She wouldn't even let a man sleep when he was worn out.

If it was her intent to dismiss them from her service there was nothing left but to drag out their lives in Utica, for to Asia they dared not return. Or, possibly, the younger men might embark on some venture of their own; but what hope for a High Priest and a man as old as Meisor? The two men of years and dignity felt themselves the more deeply insulted by those wild words of denunciation hurled at them by a mere girl.

They were amazed when they entered the room to find a smiling Queen awaiting them, although their quick eyes took note of the prone hanging and shattered candlestick. She raised her hand when they would have prostrated themselves automatically, and met them halfway.

"Forgive me! Forgive me!" she murmured, her full lips, red as a pomegranate, drooping at the corners. "My faithful friends whom I so love! Who have saved me from untold misery in Tyre and brought me safely to these unfriendly shores! But I was incensed beyond endurance by the insults of that rude barbarian, and knew not what I said. I promise you on the word of

a Queen—the word of a daughter of Mattan—that never again will I say aught to discomfit you."

And she smiled tremulously but enchantingly.

In a moment she had won them. They prostrated themselves despite her admonition.

"And now," she said when they had risen, "sit here beside me on these cushions, and I will tell you how we shall outwit Iarbas. And I think that by outwitting we shall win him, for much may be done with a man who has a sense of humor."

[VII]

EARLY on the morning of the following day Dido and her younger nobles set sail for the harbor of her desire. Only two biremes were required to carry the party, but they were followed by two galleys, in one of which reposed the hide of an enormous ox, killed and excavated the night before. The other was piled high with tents, awnings, and provisions, for it was Dido's intention to remain away for several days.

The two Shophetim stood on the quay shaking their heads. Dido had confided her purpose to them, and never in their lives had they listened to such a mad idea. Who could have conceived it but a woman, and a spoilt princess at that? They had fallen in love with her, like every one else, but they heartily wished she were sailing at the head of her fleet for some unknown port. By the exercise of tact, presents, and promptness of tribute, they had managed to keep on friendly relations with Iarbas, but what in the name of Baal should they do if he came ambling in on a camel roaring like a lion of the desert?

The sun was hot, but the awnings on the decks were ample shade for Tyrians, who found little difference between the summer suns of Africa and Asia. Dido was sparkling and mischievous. All were glad to be in action. The Phœnicians were a compound of energy and a deep temperamental love of luxury and the pleasures of sense. One by one the other cities had succumbed to indolence and self-indulgence, but the Tyrians had sternly repressed their craving for both, or surrendered only during their hours of well-earned ease. One way lay riches and greatness; the other—they shuddered at the mere thought of extinction. Even the nobles, deprived of action, maintained the standard, if only for the glory of Tyre. A few, like Tadmelak, amused themselves with factories, or had secret relations with shop-keepers.

But here was a prospect of action at last!

They had complete faith in Elissa, these young men who had romped with her as children, and, with no decrease of affection, yielded her a respect generally reserved for their own sex, as she grew to womanhood and discovered her quality. They had greeted with acclamation Mattan's announcement that she should rule with Pygmalion, and when the people had deposed her had flown to her presence to vow an undying fealty. She was their Queen, and ever should be. Those secret courts had been their delight.

Despite such amusements as are ever open to youth

and wealth, their lives had been monotonous, and they had not hesitated a moment when Tadmelak unfolded Elissa's extraordinary plot to escape from Tyre and found a kingdom of her own. Nor had Elissa ever won a profounder tribute than in their instant acceptance of that hazardous adventure, their lack of surprise. Only she could have conceived such a masterly idea, and they never doubted her ability to carry it through. Their belief in her destiny was as complete as their belief in herself.

And here they were!

All sprang to their feet, as, leaving the mountains behind them, they sailed round a high promontory and gazed at the site of their future city: a long narrow strip of coast bounded by a chain of hills in the form of a deep crescent and heavily wooded.

"A portent! A portent!" cried Dido. "Those hills are exact in shape to our hills on Tyre!" She forgot she had hated Tyre, for those hills seemed to hold wide their arms to embrace her, assure her of their kinship to the lovely amphitheater of her youth.

"There is my city!" Then she turned and pointed to a detached hill in the foreground with a broad plateau on the summit. "And there shall be my palace and citadel. And on the lower slopes of those hills will I rear my temples. The law courts and the halls of council shall be on a great public square below the palace. And there will be many streets of tall houses for my

people, and little streets for the shops. Oh, I see it! I see it!"

She raised her arms. "O Astarte! Astarte! Bless thou this my new city of Carthage. May she be the fairest in all the world, even as the Ur and the Erech of my ancestors. May she be the most famous and the richest, the most envied by all men and the happiest. And the most quickly built!"

"The Carthage of Dido the Queen!" cried Tadmelak. "And it shall live through the ages!"

These Tyrians always found some difficulty in following the imaginative flights of their idol, but for the moment they saw through her eyes, and a city of substance and beauty rose before them. They cheered and clapped their hands.

The ship sailed down the coast and entered a little bay but a short distance from the broad blue gulf, and beached on a curving shore, whose sands glittered with gold. An altar was erected, a sun-glass used to light the sacred fire, and a sheep sacrificed to the gods.

That ceremony over, Dido became the practical Phœnician at once.

She crossed the beach to the two galleys.

"Cut that ox-hide into strips so narrow they will put a blade of grass to shame," she commanded. "And be as quick as may be."

The sailors, who would far rather have sifted the sands for gold, dragged the ox-hide into a grove and fell

to with the sharp knives they had brought. They had not the vaguest idea of her purpose, but theirs not to reason why.

The tents were pitched by a stream, greatly shrunken in summer. The slaves made a fire by grinding bits of wood together, and roasted sheep and goats. Vegetables were stewed in a cauldron, and they had brought fruit in abundance. These coast valleys of Africa were exceedingly fertile and the Uticans had long since brought their domain under cultivation.

After the abundant repast all retired to the tents and slept; even Dido, for the heat of midday was conducive neither to thought nor to exploration. The men whose task it was to reduce the ox-hide to all-but-invisible strips remained inert for three hours.

Theirs was a long and delicate task, and far from completed by nightfall. But this Dido had anticipated, and she sent them a skin of wine for their supper, also a stern command to rise with the dawn.

Dido and her friends had wandered through the forests on the hills during the late afternoon, choosing sites for the temples which were to cast their beneficent shadow on the city below. Among the sterner trees of the forest was an abundance of date palms, orange and banana trees, and the attendants filled their baskets. Once they heard the trumpeting of an elephant on the heights, a boar snorted past them, and they saw the yellow streak of a leopard in a neighboring glade. The

men had brought the battle-axes of the pilots, and their daggers, but the beasts were too alarmed to offer battle.

After the evening meal they climbed to the plateau of the hill chosen by Dido for her fortress. They paced out the foundations of their future citadel, then threw themselves on the ground and gazed out over the water. The full moon made a broad path of silver to the Sicilian Isle, far away, but almost directly opposite.

"Sing to me, Iopas." Dido smiled upon a young man whose sweet tenor voice had won him high favor even at the court of Pygmalion. "Sing me the song of Tamuz to Ishtar when she had rescued him from Hades."

"At your will, O Queen. Would that I had brought my harp. But I must do as best I can without it."

And he sang, with ever increasing passion, the love-song of one snatched from the dark abode of death only to expire in the arms of the goddess while sailing on a cloud above the earth.

My Queen of Love comes to my arms!
  Her faithful eyes have sought for me,
My love comes to me with her charms;
  Let all the world now happy be!
    My Queen has come again!

Forever, dearest, let me rest
  Upon the bosom of my Queen!
Thy lips of love are honeyed quest;
  Come! Let us fly to bowering green!
    To our sweet bower again.

O Love on Earth! O Love in Heaven!
That dearest gift that gods have given,
Through all my soul let it be driven,
And make my heart its dearest haven,
For love returns the kiss!

Oh, let me feast upon thy lips,
As honey-bird the nectar sips,
And drink new rapture through my lips,
As honey-bee its head thus dips
In nectarine abyss!

I want thy form, thy loving breast,
Mine arms of love surrounding thee,
And on thy bosom sweetly rest,
Or else the world were dead to me.
No other life is bliss.

And love, you say, my Queen, is there,
Where I can breathe with life anew?
But is it so? My Love, beware!
For some things oft are false, some true,
But I thee trust again!

We fly away! From gates away!
Oh, life of bliss! Oh, breath of balm!
With wings we tread the silver way,
To trailing vines of feathery palm,
To bower of love again.

Dido thanked him graciously and gave him her hand to kiss.

Tadmelak sighed. Would that he could address his beloved in terms so melodious. But the gift of poetry had not been granted the Phœnicians. Thank the gods that even Iopas, with his silly dove's eyes like those in the songs of old Solomon, could do no better than he when it came to original love-making. And if he could not win her with honey-dripping words, neither could any other man she knew or was ever likely to know. And she leaned more to him than to the others; no doubt of that.

They fell to discussing that immortal epic "Ishtar and Izdubar," written to celebrate the great hero of Akkad and Sumir by some unknown Assyrian bard, his name forgotten but his poem drifting down through the ages. The Phœnicians had migrated from close by the buried cities of Ur and Erech on the Euphrates long ago, but they had brought the old songs with them and taught them to their children.

"Let us have something martial for a change," said Tadmelak. "With your permission, O Dido, I will recite that famous passage where Izdubar, 'bright flashing as a god's attire, doth lead in burnished gold our King of Fire,' comes to the rescue of Erech after the horrible siege and slaughter by the Elamites, and drives off the enemy."

And in a deep, sonorous voice, that made Iopas' tenor seem but a feeble pipe, he began.

The shouts of Akkad mingle with the cries
Of wounded men and fiery steeds, that rise
From all the fields with shrieks of carnage, war,
Till victory crowns the hosts of Izdubar.
The chariots are covered with the slain,
And crushed beneath lie dead and dying men,
And horses in their harness wounded fall
With deadful screams, and wildly view the wall
Of dying warriors piling o'er their heads,
And wonder why each man some fury leads;
And others break across the gory plain
In mad career till they the mountain gain;
And snorting on the hills in wild dismay,
One moment glance below, then fly away;
Away from sounds that prove their masters fiends,
Away to freedom, snuffing purer winds,
Within some cool retreat by mountain streams,
Where peacefully for them the sunlight gleams.
At last the foe is scattered o'er the plain,
And Akkad fiercely slays the flying men.
When Izdubar beholds the victory won
By Akkad's grand battalions of the sun,
His bugle call the awful carnage stays,
Then loud the cry of victory they raise.

"Thanks, dear Tadmelak," said Dido, extending her hand. "Those old tales of battle always thrill me, although I want none of them. Phœnicia has won her

great place in the world by avoiding war when she might. Those old cities of antiquity were everlastingly conquering or being conquered, and their very sites are lost to-day. Of what use the great part they played in the world so long ago? Where are they now, those awful cities? We remember but to scorn them. It is your turn, Evagorus."

And Evagorus unwisely selected the passage where Ishtar, having been repulsed after a brief surrender by Izdubar—who wanted none of a goddess with a reputation of having killed three husbands (including Tamuz) when her fickle fancy had waned—steals into the chamber of the mighty King, sound asleep after his victories.

She uses all her arts and wiles to overcome a sleepy King, half-succeeding, but finally compelled to beat an ignominious retreat.

Dido frowned when Evagorus had finished.

"I like not that Izdubar," she said fiercely. "How could any man resist her? A stupid oaf he must have been! If I loved a man and he denied me, I would strike a dagger to his heart!"

"No man will ever deny you, Dido," said Tadmelak sadly. "The spurning will ever be yours. . . . And did any man offer you so dastardly an insult, my dagger would leave yours naught to do. A figment of fancy, too ridiculous to cherish!"

Dido smiled upon him. "Yes, dear Tadmelak," she

said gayly, "I well know that you would avenge me." She changed her tone hastily. "My love is in the tomb with Sychæus. And now let us dismiss love and war and talk of lighter matters. Tell me the gossip of Utica. There was little at the banquets, from which I retired early. I have had no conversation with the women, even Anna. And those Shophetim are as solemn as owls."

"We heard long before we left Tyre that Troy had fallen," said Iopas. "They tell me here—for they have commerce with Sparta—that the great Achæan General, Agamemnon, returned to Mycenæ in triumph to be murdered by his wife and her paramour. And that Menelaus succumbed once more to the wiles of Helen and now has her safely shut up in his palace in Sparta. The Trojans are scattered far and wide. It is rumored that one Æneas, a nephew of King Priam, but born of the goddess Venus, who visited his father on the slopes of Mount Ida, escaped with twenty ships; but as long years have passed and naught has been heard of him, no doubt he is in the depths of the sea. Returning Achæans vow it is a pity, for he was a great warrior and a god to look upon."

"A god to look upon?" repeated Dido wonderingly. "Never have I seen a man who looked like Baal or Bes, and I hope I never may, for they are ugly and fearsome."

"But the Greeks have gods of great beauty, I am told, O Dido; and when they speak of a man resem-

bling a god they pay him their most extravagant compliment. This Æneas, to hear them talk, must have been a man to dazzle the eyes of all women."

"Then he must resemble but little any of the men I have ever seen," said Dido cruelly. "But I would sleep. Let us descend and seek our tents."

[VIII]

It was not until late on the following day that the last of the ox-hide was cut into infinitesimal strips. Dido, seizing the highest on the pile, ran to the northern end of the narrow valley between sea and hills and laid it triumphantly on the ground. Her nobles, heavily laden with the malodorous bits, followed suit, placing them edge to edge. Night had fallen before they were halfway up the lower of the crescent hills, but they resumed the task early next morning. It was back-breaking work, but no menial hands should take part in this historic performance. Abbas alone was allowed to participate; his hands, if not descended from Erech and Ur, at least had never known menial work. Dido paced beside them, a flagon of wine in one hand, a goblet in the other, encouraging and companioning them. Fortunately there was a cool breeze from the sea, and they slept in the tents during the more scorching hours of the day.

It was too much to expect that the hide of one ox, however cunningly divided, could embrace the entire peninsula, for north of the hills was a mountain and

between the coast land and the isthmus a large plain; but when night fell and the task was over, as much of it had been encircled as would serve for the beginnings of a city. When Iarbas had been placated, or grown indifferent, that city would naturally spread and embrace the greater part of the peninsula.

Dido impulsively kissed each of her nobles—quite impartially. It had been a hearty whole-souled kiss, for Dido did nothing by halves, and the young men slept ill that night. Dido asked forgiveness of Sychæus, via Astarte, when she retired to her tent. But was she not as a sister to these young men she had known since childhood? Even might she be called their mother, for what was a Queen but the mother of her people? But honey bees buzzed through her dreams and stung her awake more than once.

They returned to Utica on the following day. The Shophetim had been unable to keep their counsel and the whole city knew of Dido's fantastic intention to take Iarbas at his word. They poured out of their houses as the ships were sighted, and when she waved her scarf, the light of victory in her eyes, they cheered themselves hoarse.

"But there is yet somewhat to accomplish," said Badbaal, as he led her to his house at the head of the still cheering procession. "Iarbas must be informed before you lay the first stone. He is a man of his word, but he may choose to interpret the word 'cover' literally.

You have surrounded a portion of the land with the hide of an ox, not covered it."

"Send your messenger to-morrow," said Dido. "I well knew the chance I took. But even though he is a barbarian he is a King even as I am a Queen, and kings keep their word from policy, unless highly inconvenient. He has had time to cool off by this time, and no doubt has reflected that a city on that harbor can do him no harm. Moreover . . . well . . . of course I shall wait until the return of the messenger."

"I shall go myself." Badbaal came to a sudden determination. How fair she was to look upon, this wondrous Princess of Tyre! Fragments of the songs of Solomon, that ancient King of Israel, who had been a friend of King Hiram, flitted through his mind. Would that he were a younger man, for he was of noble birth himself. But, did he bind her to him with many favors, and much display of cunning and wisdom, she would invite him to her city and give him high place. It was impossible not to believe that the gods had willed she should reign.

She rewarded him with a dazzling smile, and he continued:

"Perhaps it had been well had I gone with the embassy. I have had many diplomatic dealings with Iarbas, and he has sat at my board here in Utica when the great fleet was in port. He likes a revel with white men and I do my best to please him."

Dido gave him her hand to kiss.

He set out the next day, leaving many anxious hearts behind him. Dido alone refused to be apprehensive. Her faith in her star was quite restored, although she went to the Temple and made sacrifice to Astarte.

This time her faith was justified. Badbaal found Iarbas in high good humor. He had strangled three more wives, whose fading charms and importunities had got on his nerves, and had received from a loyal subject but the day before a girl of exquisite beauty just bursting into flower.

He laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks and his great form shook the throne as he listened to the story of the clever device by which he had been outwitted.

"By all your gods and mine," he roared, "that woman was born to be a Queen, and she shall have the whole peninsula. And five thousand strong men of Libya shall she have to build her city. Let her find stone and timber where she will, and elephants to draw the loads. She will add to the fame of my empire. Egypt and Abyssinia will rend the air with their howls of envy, for Iarbas—Iarbas—is her overlord! And her yearly tribute shall be heavy: silver shekels, many hundred sacks of butter and rounds of cheese; pots of clarified butter, bales of wool, much incense. And tell her to send me right away a beauteous robe for my little Bassibe. That will seal the contract!"

[IX]

No time was lost. Blacks were set to work hewing stone and cutting down trees. Dido bade a gracious farewell to the citizens of Utica, leaving handsome presents for Badbaal and all who had offered hospitality to the fleet, poor as well as rich, and, accompanied by the patient Anna and all her nobles save Meisor, sailed to the harbor of Carthage. The women were left behind with the children, but as the distance was only seventeen miles, their husbands would return for frequent visits. The wives remained without protest. They had had enough of pioneering and preferred houses to tents.

A temporary wooden Temple was hastily erected and Belator offered daily sacrifice. Tadmelak, Phalas, two of the older nobles, Aslartus and Agras, acted as directors. The sailors set up wine shops for the blacks, and the more intelligent were placed in charge of the commissary department; others assisted in the building of ships; the pay of all doubled. The treasure was buried by the slaves at night, there to remain until it should find harbor within stout stone walls. Architects,

masons, carpenters, stone-squarers, and builders had accompanied the party from Utica.

Dido, wearing high-laced purple buskins, a single loose garment knotted above her knees, her hair snooded in a golden net, seemed to be everywhere at once. She pored over the designs of the architects, and some of her suggestions made them knit their brows, but many were practical. She knew nothing of the science of building, but she knew what she wanted. At other times she was darting among the men bringing in the great trees and stones, or hewing them into shape. She even visited the commissary department daily and examined the public scales. She prodded elephants to make them move faster, and herself indicated the laying out of streets, squares, and a public park.

"I have never seen you so restless," said Anna, one midday as they retired to their tent. "You are not still a moment, save at night and this hour. Do you never tire?"

"Tire? Restless? No, I never tire, and I cannot wait to see my city built. Those blacks are as lazy as crocodiles. They must be watched every minute."

"But Tadmelak and the others are here to relieve you of all care. Why wear yourself out?"

"They are more afraid of me than of all the men together. They think I am no mortal, but one of those Greek goddesses they have heard of."

"Much they know about Greek goddesses. If they are afraid of you it is because of your flashing eyes, your white skin and gold hair—and the astonishing fact that you are a woman to whom all these lordly white men pay obeisance. But they will do as well without you, and you will wear all the flesh off your bones. It is something else that makes you so restless. What is it?"

"Something else? What new idea is this? Is it not enough that I wish my city to rise as quickly as may be? And do you know me so little as to think I could loaf in a tent while it is building? It delights me to see each stone brought in and piled upon the others, and I can scarce contain my impatience until the first foundation of my Carthage is laid in the earth. It enchants me to hear the ring of the hammer on the great stones, the chisel at the edges. All my life I have yearned for action, and I have it at last."

"It was seldom you were not content to live quietly in the palace with Sychæus," said Anna shrewdly. "You rebelled at being dethroned, but I never noticed any disposition to rush about all the time and accomplish this and that."

Dido flushed. "I was younger then and opportunity had not come to me. And had I not persuaded Sychæus, through the nobles, to leave Tyre and found a great city?"

"Yes, when you knew his life was menaced. Such an idea never occurred to you before."

"It may be; but I suddenly awoke. I would have saved Sychæus—yes, with my own life—but when Astarte put the idea into my head that day as I walked beside the Litany, I saw a vision of my own city, and of that I thought little less than of Sychæus. It seemed to me then I had slept through long years, and only awakened to my true destiny at that moment."

"You were never asleep—not you! But you were happy, and therefore content for the most part. The truth is you need a husband, and I would that you smiled upon Tadmelak—"

Dido flew into a temper. "What do you talk about? *I* need a husband? I? Am I then a woman of common mould who cannot sleep soundly without a man beside her? And have I not vowed eternal fidelity to my murdered Sychæus?"

"Husbands have their uses," said Anna dryly. "I would have none of them myself; but *you*—will you not think of Tadmelak? Many are the women who would win him if they could, and no man is better to look upon. You were not yourself when you made that vow, and Astarte would release you from it. Tadmelak would pour all the wealth of his love upon you, and make you happy and content. Much wisdom he has also—"

"He will give me his wisdom when I need it. Why

should I marry him? I want no living husband." She paused and hesitated. "It is true that I might love him could I love any man again, for above all men—living —I do like and admire him, and it gives me pleasure when he is beside me. But my heart followed my lord into that cold tomb under the shadow of Lebanon, and there it must rest forevermore."

"I wonder," said Anna.

But an hour later even she forgot all else in the solemn rites that celebrated the laying of the first stone of the city of Carthage. Carthage that was to dazzle the world throughout seven centuries of its history.

PART THREE

[I]

THE city had risen. Gone was the wilderness. The peninsula was many miles in circumference, and much of the land toward the isthmus was dotted with farms and industriously cultivated. A few shade trees had been left in the great central square, or Eurychôrus, with its lofty Temple, its Treasure House, its Hall of Elders, the Hall of the Merchants, the House of the Shophetim, and little fanes.

Dido had distracted her architects by changing her mind many times, but the Temple of Baal—that deity now localized as Baal-Hammon in deference to "Libya's burning god"—stood on the west side of the Eurychôrus. It was flanked by the smaller temples, dedicated to gods borrowed from Egypt and erected further to placate the Libyans, whose blood flowed in an irregular stream from that once all-powerful state. Bes, the god of music, hideous in a feathered headdress; Ra, the sun-god; Osiris, the god of the dead; Amen-Ra, another variety of the sun-god. The Phœnicians themselves were connected with Egypt by many ties and had long since adopted Bes.

Astarte too had been promoted and was now Tanit —one of her many names—and her Temple stood on a hill near the citadel.

All buildings were stuccoed and brightly colored, or painted white and inlaid with plates of metal.

The long narrow streets, rising up the lower of the crescent hills, were lined with tall wooden houses in the fashion of Tyre. Other streets were gay with bazaars and little shops. The quarter for the workers and sailors was between the large bay and the gulf. Two temples had been erected for their worship. The wall across the isthmus was still building.

To one plan Dido had held firmly. A tremendous palace covered the greater part of the plateau of the hill in the foreground, now called Bozra, a Semitic word signifying fortress. Beside it a temple had been erected to Esmoun, god of healing.

It was a palace of many courts and roofs, pleasant gardens, sparkling fountains and transplanted trees, shrines to Astarte with ever-burning fires on the altars, terraces, and sheltered promenades. It was surrounded by a high wall with four towers, paced by sentinels day and night; a mere gesture of majesty, for while many came to admire, none threatened. Egypt was weak, Abyssinia far away. No King in Asia, however he might covet the fair city of Carthage, had the navy for any such enterprise. The Greeks were weary after their ten years' siege of Troy. Hesperia, not long since

renamed Italy, was still a rude miscellany of warring tribes.

All the Phœnician colonies, after the first spasm of jealousy, took pride in the city of Dido, whose fleet now outnumbered the Tyrian, swelled her numbers, and hastened to offer their merchandise. Shiploads of furniture and household utensils had come from every port.

And Tyre? An embassy had been sent at the end of the first year to offer sacrifice at the shrine of Baal-Melkart and leave a handsome tribute in the Temple. They had been diplomatically received, for the Tyrians were rejoicing at the retreat of the Assyrian war-cloud, and in no mind to cherish resentment against Elissa. They had other things to think of, and what was, was.

Pygmalion hated her as viciously as ever, and would have made war on Carthage had he dared. But he knew better than to suggest it to his peace-loving Phœnicians. He was content on the whole, for Tyre was still the greatest city in the world and his Queen had presented him with two sets of twins.

But that city of Carthage had taken time to build, despite the army of blacks and the energy of the architects. Nearly three years had passed since the first stone was laid. Dido's own energy had never flagged, and not a waking hour passed but she found occupation for her restless mind and body. Long before the city was finished she had sat every morning in the

Temple of Astarte and listened to the petitions of her people, a function rarely to be neglected. In the early hours she hunted with her younger nobles in the mountain forest on the northern part of the peninsula. After the public audience in the Temple she met her ministers, and in the afternoon she held an informal audience for the ladies of the court. There was a banquet every evening, followed by music and dancing. Her favorite instrument was the dulcimer, which she had learned from an Assyrian slave, and it was her delight to evoke sweet sounds from the taut wires with her little cork-tipped hammers. Others were proficient with the harp, the lute, and the lyre, and Iopas had trained young and promising voices. Dancing girls had been found among the wives of the sailors, ravished from Cyprus and Rhodes.

She had even visited the cities on the Sicilian Isle, mainly for shopping purposes, taking Anna and the ladies-in-waiting. They and all those other matrons and maidens who had wept and wailed on the way to Cyprus had all the pliability of their race and were now more Carthaginian than Tyrian. They were puffed up with pride in the new city and devoted to a Queen who had kept every promise. No longer did mothers tremble when their arms held a newborn infant, and when the great fleet stopped at Carthage to wonder and traffic they wrote patronizing letters to their elderly relatives.

Never was a people more happy and contented. None more so than Belator, who now lorded it in a palace not far from his magnificent temple, and was also one of the Queen's counselors.

All but Tadmelak! He was far from contented and happy, although he too had been busy. Baal! Yes! No man had ever been busier.

He had smoothed down the ruffled feathers of the architects when Dido had threatened to dismiss them and send to rival colonies for others; to say nothing of interceding with her capricious majesty. He attended the hunt, the morning Councils and the nightly banquet. He had superintended the laying out of the streets and the pleasure grounds. He had settled disputes among the women, who wanted first this and then that, a house here, a balcony there; placated shopkeepers dissatisfied with their sites. He had arbitrated the claims of Rhodians, Cretans, Maltese, who opined the cream should be theirs. He personally watched over the building of the lower quarter, and the reed huts were as roomy and comfortable as might be, with a square for the children to play in. And to him—even when seeking repose in his villa—all complaints were brought, for was not he the right hand of the Queen? He even went to Egypt to buy furnishings for the palace and temples, and to Britain for tin —risking the perils of a vast and tumultuous ocean, where he was horribly seasick—that the bronze pillars

of the Temple of Baal-Hammon might be cast without awaiting the return of the Tyrian fleet. He had visited the other colonies in the Mediterranean: on the islands, on the eastern and western coasts of Hispania and Gaul, on the African shores, persuading them to enter into an immediate alliance with Carthage, "noblest daughter of Tyre," and returned with doctors, midwives, drugs, metallurgists, and image makers.

Twice had he visited Iarbas to admonish him against paying too soon his long-threatened visit to the court of Dido, a lady who had evoked in that potentate a profound curiosity. But Tadmelak's argument appealed to him. The Queen wished her city to burst upon her kind overlord in full glory, to receive him in a state appropriate to one god-born and the greatest ruler in all Africa.

He had longed for action, he sometimes reflected grimly, and he certainly had it.

But his suit had not progressed. None higher in the favor of Dido, none so indispensable. She sometimes quarreled with him furiously and called him names, but on the whole she was amiable and enchanting. Rarely had he a moment alone with her. He might ride beside her in the hunt, but beyond was ever Iopas making dove's eyes at her, or Evagorus, also idiotically in love with her. At the morning Councils, although to him she graciously referred the knottiest points, she never invited him to linger. He might sit beside her at

the banquet and the revel that followed, but not a word could he whisper that would not be overheard. Iopas was always hanging round with his harp waiting to be asked for a song, or Gê to beg her to gladden their eyes with a dance.

Sometimes she raised her jeweled fan and behind it met his eyes for a moment. His flamed, but in hers he could detect nothing but a meditative wonder, a deliberation not precisely calm, but controlled. And quickly passing. Nor ever a softened inflection when so often she commended her "dear Tadmelak."

His only consolation was the poor one that has been invoked by so many men before and since. If to him she showed no sign of yielding she smiled even less encouragingly on others. Many were her wooers, both at home and from abroad. But foreign princes were sweetly dismissed, and her subjects never dared an avowal.

Why should a man love one woman with such consuming fire? He often asked himself the question with bitter resentment. And a fountain sealed, at that? Could she still love that cold corpse—who had been too old for her anyhow—or did she have a heart of stone? Why then was she the most seductive of women? with glowing, often slumbrous eyes, with a rounded, lithe body whose every movement seemed pleading for love? Why was her voice so voluptuous, with deep vibrations that made a man's blood course swiftly

through his veins? Why did she dance with such maddening abandon, her ripe lips parted, her eyes ecstatic, her arms wreathed as if to embrace? Why was she not a skinny old maid like Anna if she had naught for man? And youth did not last forever. She was twenty-six, and throwing away years that should be full of delight. Why could not Sychæus have died in his bed after a long and disillusionizing illness?

Why, oh, why?

Why could he not love one of these exquisite maidens grown to womanhood since the flight from Tyre? They smiled upon him from their balconies, and their fathers wooed him. His villa echoed with loneliness, and sometimes his thoughts veered from cruel Dido to inviting Terah, the youngest granddaughter of Meisor, a girl with the soft eyes of a gazelle, whose curling lashes swept her burning cheeks whenever he encountered her in the temples or walking demurely beside her mother. Her hair was ebon, her skin olive and clear, with the pink tide rising and falling like little waves on the shore. She swayed like a reed as she walked and her feet scarce touched the ground. Of all the young fruit ripening to perfection, she was the most luscious. And his for the picking.

His sumptuous villa was empty save of slaves, and at times his loneliness smote him like a physical blow. Now and again he saw her flitting about the house—

children flitting after her. He wanted a son to carry on his name.

But, alas, those visions vanished almost with their coming. He was consumed with passion for one woman alone. It was not Terah he wanted in his villa, but Dido in her palace; in those secret rooms he had never penetrated—although, he reflected ironically—he had bought the furniture for them in Egypt.

Rarely did his determination to win her weaken. His character had matured during these years of responsibility. Always of a serious turn, although merry-hearted, he was now a man of full stature, and looked back upon his years in Tyre as little more than a prolonged boyhood. Then he had worshiped Elissa as one might worship a star for want of something better. Never for a moment had he harbored the faintest hope of possessing her, and he had enjoyed all youth's melancholy in loving a woman who could never be his.

But he had emerged from a life of dreams into a life of action. He felt incomparably older, and his manhood demanded its rights. He believed she would marry him if she could make up her mind to marry any one—or felt the least inclination! Queens had married subjects before, and Dido was one to marry an Abbas did it please her, and snap her fingers at the world. Himself, he had royal blood in his veins, and his haughty spirit rated Tadmelak son of Hannibal the equal of kings.

His only hope was that in this period of comparative

inactivity, in this peaceful happy city where there was now less to consume her energies, her thoughts would turn to love and the demands of youth. Anna was his friend. She must find him an opportunity to see that elusive tantalizing creature alone.

[II]

He hastened to the palace one afternoon with an unwelcome piece of news for the Queen. The levee of the women was over, and they were descending the movable staircase that stood against the face of the hill. They were laughing and chattering, an indication that Dido had been in a lively humor herself; the moods of no woman were more uncertain. Tadmelak drew a sigh of relief—although, to be sure, she might be either cross or melancholy by the time he was admitted to her presence.

The great bronze gates were open, and he entered, as ever, unchallenged. The outer court was paved and without ornament, lined with stables for horses, mules, chariots and milch goats. A spring supplied water for the palace. The quarters of the Queen's Guard were in the towers, reached by flights of steps; there was a large room for the mess, and amusement when off duty. Here also were stored provisions to withstand a long siege; an idea of Tadmelak's, for he believed in taking no chances.

He crossed the court, and another pair of bronze doors flew open; entrance was never denied him at whatever hour he might come.

This first of the inner courts presented a far different appearance. Surrounded by a colonnade, it was laid out as a garden, with three fountains, and shaded by banana and orange trees, now heavy with golden fruit, and many little walks among the blooming flower beds. Scarlet and rainbow-hued sun-birds made their homes in the trees. On one of the grassy lawns was a purple awning sheltering a dais and a small throne; although it was Dido's habit after receiving obeisance to saunter with her ladies along the garden paths or the colonnade.

Another and smaller court led to the great front of the palace, approached by terraces of black marble, decorated with immense vases of bronze and brass.

It was Tadmelak's faint hope that Dido had lingered in the garden, for it was yet three hours before the nightly banquet. But even the ladies of the household had retired. The garden was deserted save by the strutting peacocks and the dog-face monkeys, the birds that darted from tree to tree, or, rising straight in the still air like smoke from a hearth, swooped off to the forests.

Many a time had Tadmelak entered this court in the late afternoon, hoping to surprise his Queen, but it was possible she suspected his purpose, for it was not

her habit to linger, and disappointment had ever awaited him.

He must enter the palace and send her an urgent message.

And then he saw a movement behind a pillar of the farthest colonnade, close by one of Astarte's glowing altars.

He stole forward softly, walking on the grass, but no ears were sharper than Dido's, and she came suddenly from behind the pillar and confronted him.

Her brows met. "What do you wish at this hour, Tadmelak?" she demanded unamiably. "It is time I go to rest before the banquet. Don't prostrate yourself. In this garden I waive formality, and you would get green spots on that spotless garment."

"I come with unpleasant news, O Dido, and at this hour because no time should be lost."

Her flexible eyebrows described an arch, then came down in a straight line over apprehensive eyes.

"Is it to do with Iarbas? Would that the god he claims as father would fly away with him."

"The news is of Iarbas. A swift messenger has just come in announcing his intention to attend your banquet to-night."

"He might wait until he's invited! No doubt he eats an ox at every meal, and there is no time to kill, dress, and roast one."

"Perhaps he thought that invitation tarried over-

long! But your fare is always abundant, and he has dined at civilized tables before. I fancy he restrains his appetite when sitting at meat with Phœnicians."

"I am sure he eats like a pig."

She led the way to a bench in the colonnade and motioned to Tadmelak to sit, drawing her blue mantle about her and turning her brooding eyes upon the man most in her confidence.

"I fear more than seeing that black tyrant in my city," she said gloomily. "Rumors have come to me."

"What rumors? What rumors could come to your ears that have passed by my own?"

He spoke jealously and Dido smiled faintly.

"Remember that you returned but yesterday from Cytherea. This is the rumor and it is a dire one. It is said that he wishes to marry me."

"*Marry you!* Marry *Dido!* To conceive such an idea he must have been mad or drunk!"

Tadmelak had sprung to his feet, his hand flown to the hilt of his dagger. "Oh, would that the isthmus wall were built! He would never pass the gates."

"He will never marry Dido. Seat yourself again, dear Tadmelak. I have had some experience in dismissing suitors. I shall not even close the gates of the citadel against him, for he would destroy my city and murder my people. But, I confess, this rumor—which may well be true—has caused me much misgiving. That is the one thing that never entered my calcula-

tions. No King of Libya has ever sought a wife among the Phœnicians, and for three hundred years there have been thousands of young and beautiful women in our African colonies. And why should he want Dido, of all women? He must know I would be no submissive wife in a black man's harem. An imperious Queen, accustomed to homage and obedience, is no mate for a Libyan tyrant."

"You are Dido," said Tadmelak dryly. "And perhaps he thinks it is time for a change. But this is no matter for joking! We have encountered many obstacles and braved many dangers, but they were as naught to this. Would that the isthmus wall were built! We could defy him forever, and induce the other colonies to rise against him. But if worse comes to worst the nobles and their families may take refuge here in the citadel. The others will be safe in the ships—"

"And my beautiful Carthage laid waste! And I condemned to spend my life on a rock! No! I shall know how to deal with him. The arts of women are many. And he is but a barbarian, mighty as he may be. Leave him to me. I hate the thought of the encounter, but I fear him not."

She leaned back against the wall. Her hair was unbound and hung like a gold panel against the blue of her mantle. The light was fading between those high walls. The peace of evening had descended. She looked surpassingly lovely.

Tadmelak, always secretly tumultuous when beside her, and now agitated by the danger that threatened her, lost his head. He fell on his knees and buried his face in her mantle.

"Oh, Dido! Dido!" he murmured. "Give me the right to protect you. Let me stand at your side as your husband when that black monster enters to-night."

And then courage suddenly swept his veins, for his head pressed against her knee and he felt a light responsive vibration. "Dido! Dido! Cannot you love me?"

He raised his head, his burning eyes, and caught both her hands in his. Her face was flushed and her breath came quickly. "I have sometimes thought—believed—hoped—" His voice faltered, but he went on. "Surely you must want love again. And who could make you happier than I? In all ways you have tried me and not found me wanting. Youth passes quickly, my beautiful one. Let us be happy while we may."

Dido snatched away her hands and buried them in his hair, forcing his handsome passionate face down and out of sight.

"Remember my vow," she said sternly. "I am dedicated to my Lord Sychæus."

Tadmelak's tones were muffled but scornful. "You were but a child when you made that vow. Would you make such a vow to-day? A woman who has been for three years a Queen and developed from a rash im-

pulsive girl into a woman forced to think for herself and her people? It was a vow made in the frenzy of grief. The tragic death of Sychæus had fevered your mind. Tell me—"

He jerked his head from under her hands and looked into her dilated eyes. "Is Dido Elissa? Could you love Sychæus if you met him to-day? Could you love Belator, who in many ways resembles him? You married Sychæus when you were sixteen. He was kind and manly—and fatherly— He won your love, which became a habit—"

"I loved him with all the passion of soul and body!"

"Because you knew no better. But he was a serious man and far too old for you. His office of High Priest he loved even better than he loved you. Did he companion your youth? Did you have anything but love in common? What were you to him but an entrancing child to play with in his less serious hours? And you loved him because no heart was ever more loyal than yours, and if you were often bored and lonely it would have shocked you to admit it."

"But I did love him," muttered Dido. "I did! I did!"

Tadmelak's voice was impatient and angry. "Of course you loved him. Have I denied it? But that was three long years ago. A woman does not love a brown mummy in a winding-sheet, hidden away on a shelf in a tomb. You may live for forty years—forty wasted years. And long before the end you will have forgotten

what Sychæus looked like. The Israelites say that the span of man's life is three-score years and ten. Will Dido at seventy cherish the memory of a man who, had he managed to live on, would then be a hundred? Oh, Dido! Dido! We could have many years of love together, go down through the years together, happy in our memories, and happy in each other!"

Dido was profoundly moved. He had encircled her body with his arms and it trembled violently. She covered her face with her hands. What he said was true enough. Had Sychæus lived to die here in Carthage she would have made no such vow, for to-day she would not be desolate. Her interests would have been too independent of him, too many and absorbing. He would have ceased to be all in all.

And her vow? Shaken as she was, she was able to wonder if she would not break that vow did she but love this man well enough. She thrilled to his touch, she had yearned toward him more than once. Passion, long unslaked, had driven her hither and thither to find distraction where she could. What more was there to love than this . . . but *something*—she knew not what. . . . It seemed to her that she looked deep into herself and saw an inner flame, still and waiting. It burned but it did not leap . . . withdrawn and aloof. . . .

Tadmelak was not the god who rode the storm, but the mortal whose arm had pinned her to the deck.

That memory returned to her vividly. All her being had been in that swift unconscious spring upward. Deep down was a secret Dido, a stranger to herself. . . . But all the rest of her wanted this man.

She dropped her hands and laid them on his arms, pushing them gently.

"It may be," she said. "Why not? Oh, why not? But I must have time to think, dear Tadmelak. And you must let me go now and rest. This is an ill preparation for the ordeal of to-night. You are more to me than any man—that much you know. But no more now."

And with that he was forced to be content. He watched her run down the colonnade and disappear through a little door at the end, then hastened to the wall, both gloomy and elated.

[III]

One of the manifold duties that Tadmelak had taken upon himself was to organize a small army. The Utican General had advised him, spending some time in Carthage. All the young men, high and low, were pressed into service and drilled once a week by Captains, for Tadmelak had little time to give them. Once a month, however, he reviewed them on the plain, and they found him as thorough in his discipline as in everything else.

The young men of his own class were not averse. It was a new amusement and it filled them with a sense of importance, although they had no hankering for war. But even though all the tribes on the littoral were subject to Iarbas, there were lawless bands that sometimes got out of hand. Liking war or not, they would have defended their city valiantly.

Otherwise the time of the young men was their own. Many of them, as well as the older nobles, had become merchants before the city was half built, for all were eager to make new fortunes. They had been able to

bring only their movable treasure with them, and what they left behind was promptly confiscated by Pygmalion.

They found much to amuse and interest them in the new life. The court was brilliant; they hunted, played games, gave personal attention to their factories, sailed with the merchandise to neighboring colonies. And those who had wife and children loved the hearthstone. They were growing wealthy again, and Iarbas was one of the best of their customers.

It was understood that when their General, Tadmelak, blew two blasts on his trumpet from the palace wall, the nobles, who composed the cavalry, were to arm themselves hastily and assemble in the public park; three blasts would call out the infantry; five the entire army. In less than five minutes after Tadmelak left the Queen, two loud imperative blasts rang through the city; and when he rode into the gardens he found a seething mass of men and horses awaiting him.

The faces turned up to his were expectant if slightly anxious. Every man whipped out his sword and saluted the General.

Tadmelak smiled encouragingly. "It is not war," he shouted. "We go to meet King Iarbas, who comes to attend the Queen's banquet to-night. We must pay him due honor—and impress him with our strength and good discipline. To horse!"

And thus it came about that Iarbas, sitting in his grandeur on an elephant, and followed by some forty officers of his guard on camels, beheld a small army galloping toward him, naked swords flashing in the last rays of the sun.

It was a startling sight to greet the eyes of a king who had come on a peaceful errand, inspired mainly by curiosity; he had opened his mouth to bellow his wrath, when the cavalcade stopped abruptly, and the General rode forward alone, sheathing his sword.

By this time Tadmelak had mastered the Libyan tongue and needed no interpreter. He swung himself from his horse, prostrated himself, and remounted.

"Have I your permission to speak, O King?" he asked.

"You have," rumbled Iarbas, not yet reassured.

"I come from the Queen to welcome the god-born to her city, and escort him with all ceremony to the gates of the palace. If it is your royal will to be her guest for the night, many rooms will be at your disposal."

The god-born smiled graciously; infinitely relieved, and as flattered as a great King may be.

"I expected this attention," he said loftily. "It is something Shophetim never think of, but your Queen knows the usages of royalty. Your little army makes a good appearance, but I doubt if you will ever have cause to lead it into action. My tribes are now well in

hand. The last time one of those bands prowled too close to a colony I had them pursued and massacred. Iarbas has vowed protection to the Phœnicians who pay tribute to him, and Iarbas is a man of his word." He paused a moment, ruminated, and then shook his head. "I would put your Queen to no inconvenience and my tents shall be pitched without the city."

He doesn't altogether trust our Dido, thought Tadmelak, but aloud he said earnestly: "In the pleasure gardens, O Mighty King! Do us that honor!"

"In your pleasure gardens, then. And when I have rid myself of the dust of travel and am freshly oiled and arrayed, come to the door of the royal tent and lead me to the presence of your Queen. I would fill my eyes with her beauty and my stomach with her viands. To-morrow," he added with childish vanity, not uncommon in more civilized kings, "I would have her see me mounted on this elephant, my traveling throne."

"You must make a grand parade through the streets to-morrow, O King, that all Carthage may witness your magnificence, and look with wonder upon the son of Hammon. There shall be a great sacrifice in the Temple of your god, and as the fleet is in harbor, perhaps you will condescend to visit it and sail on the sea?"

"I like not the sea," said the King hastily. "Once I accepted an invitation from the Captain of the Tyrian

fleet and I was naught but a man with a heaving stomach. But I shall see everything in this new city on the edge of my empire; be sure of that. Now, lead me to your gardens."

[IV]

When Iarbas, followed by a small retinue, and escorted by Tadmelak, entered the banquet hall of the palace, his eyes met a resplendent sight. It was an immense room with a gilded raftered ceiling, the walls covered with the richly broidered hangings of Tyrian purple that had graced a similar hall on Island Tyre. Blazing lamps swung from the ceilings, tapers burned in seven-branched candelabra, torches in high cylindrical vases.

Down the center of the room were four long polished tables groaning under such a display of gold and silver as the King had never seen in his own palace or any other. Each piece, Tadmelak informed him, was graven with some legend of Tyre or of the Tyrians' more deed-doing ancestors of Erech and Ur. The largest piece, rising some three feet high, was a golden simulation of a Ziggurat, one of those staged towers the people of Sumir had erected in their cities: the idea borrowed by the Babylonians for their Tower of Babel. Its massive effect was lightened somewhat by the little jeweled men on the platforms.

Slaves carved smoking viands at side tables. Couches lined the longer tables, unoccupied for the moment. A magnificently arrayed company of men and women stood beside them. They made deep obeisance as the Libyan King entered and then stared with all their eyes, for a more superb and fantastic creature they had never beheld. He wore a solid gold breastplate and a scarlet loin cloth embroidered with gold. From his mighty shoulders fell a train of cloth of gold sewn with uncut jewels and lined with scarlet. On his woolly but distinguished head was a blazing crown a foot high, topped off with feathers, and under it his large black eyes rolled from side to side. The naked parts of his black seven feet were as highly polished as the jewels in his crown, but, Tadmelak had thankfully noted, the oil was fresh.

Those rolling eyes took in everything at a glance; the smoking viands (he smacked his lips, for he was very hungry), the gorgeous costumes of men and women come to do him honor; missed not a detail of that splendid room and the imperial display of plate. But after that one roving glance his eyes came to focus on the Queen, and a chill ran down his spine.

Dido sat on a silver throne on a dais at the far end of the room. She wore a small crown of purest white diamonds set in electron, her loose gown was of silver tissue, unrelieved by any color. Her face was as white as the moon, even the natural red of her lips concealed

under a pale pink paste. There were blue shadows under her eyes, and her hair was hidden beneath a silver veil.

She looked cold, remote, as ethereal as moonlight, more ghost than woman.

As Iarbas walked, none too eagerly, down the space between the tables, she rose slowly to her feet; so slowly that she seemed to rise tier by tier like some fabled tower fashioned by invisible hands; and as the eye followed this phenomenon wonderingly it suffered the illusion that she reached an abnormal height. But despite the impression of tall and forbidding majesty, there was an air of languor about the stately form and high head. It was as if something drooped within, and only will held her erect.

She raised her scepter with its glittering point.

Her voice as she spoke was flat and toneless.

"Thrice welcome to Carthage, O Iarbas god-born. We, Dido, Queen of Carthage, welcome our good landlord to this feast prepared in his honor, and beg he will eat and make merry. Will the son of Hammon deign to sit here beside us?"

She indicated a chair on her right, and sank back on her throne as if overcome by the slight effort she had made.

Iarbas, mumbling he knew not what, mounted the dais and disposed himself in the armchair, which he immediately discovered was too small for him. Tad-

melak, shaking with laughter, took the chair on her left, and a fraction lower than the throne. How could he ever have doubted her!

Dido waved her scepter and the company hurriedly took possession of their couches, curiosity more avid than appetite. What was Dido up to now? They had seen her in many guises, but never as a wraith. They were a quick-witted people, however, and not long in solving the riddle.

The slaves passed the first course, others carrying a table to be shared by the Queen and her guest, a smaller one for the Chief Counselor. For the moment Iarbas forgot his discomposure and attacked a guinea-hen with both hands. He ate it more daintily than was to have been expected, and with as little noise as he could compass. For the first time in his life he was awed, almost terrified.

Dido picked at the wing of a fowl, and laid it down with a faint sigh.

Silence reigned.

A course of venison with peas and lupins was served, and the capacious jaws of Iarbas disposed of the dish with concentration and ardor.

Silence reigned.

The edge taken from his appetite—little more, however—the god-born looked about him, and depression assailed him once more. His own banquets were hilarious affairs.

Dido turned her tired eyes upon him.

"Have my people your permission to make merry, O King?" she asked. Her voice was weak, barely audible, and sent Tadmelak into fresh convulsions.

"For Hammon's sake—yes!" thundered the King of all Libya. "I feel as if I were in the tombs of my ancestors!"

Dido drew herself up and pinched her nostrils. "My people merely stand in awe of one so mighty, and know the usages of courts," she said acidly. "But I will give the signal, as you so graciously permit."

In a moment the rafters rang with laughter long suppressed, and a feverish chattering. They had indulged in many anticipations when told of the visit of the King, but little had they expected so rare a comedy.

Iarbas stared at them gloomily. He had no one to talk to, to laugh with. This still white thing beside him had barely opened her mouth, and, the gods knew, he had no wish that she should.

She made a signal to the High Steward and a moment later the wide space between the central tables presented a lovely picture. Slender nymphs, scantily clad in vivid colors, danced as lightly as a bird skims from flower to flower, each posture more enchanting than the last.

But Iarbas snorted aloud. They did not compare with his black substantial beauties.

He was growing more unhappy every minute. The

chair pinched him in seven different places. Sweets were being brought in and he had not had enough to eat. He never did at a white man's table; these abstemious Phœnicians were no hosts for a full-blooded African. No doubt he would be served with but one goblet of wine.

Iopas took up his harp and sang. It was a sad little song, the lament of the minstrel of Erech after the downfall of his city, and before Izdubar had come to the rescue.

Farewell, ye solitudes, farewell!
I will not moulder rotting lie
With no one's lips to wish me well.
O give me immortality!

But what is fame? A bubble blown
Upon the breeze that bursts its shell.
And all our brightest hopes are flown,
And leave our solitude a hell.

On earth what man is great? Alas, no one,
For Thou alone art great. Through earth's vast bounds!
When wide Thy awful voice in Heaven resounds,
The gods fall prostrate to our Holy One.

This dismal lay, mischievously selected, however, was followed by a rollicking folk song, and all the company took up the refrain to the louder accompaniment of kettledrums.

But Iarbas could think of nothing but his uncomfortable person, his unsatisfied appetite. He felt the beginning of cramps inside and out.

When the wine was brought in he drained his goblet at a draught and held it forth imperiously before the slave could pass. Drunk, he might feel better.

And then he met Tadmelak's eyes for the first time. His own said as plainly as words: "Get me out of this! Get me out of this!"

Tadmelak whispered to the Queen. She arose with extreme languor and moved her weary eyes to her royal guest.

"You will forgive me if I leave the revel, O mighty King?" she asked faintly. "But I am not well and would go to my couch and the ministrations of my women. Perchance I am overwhelmed by the honor of this visit from the god-born of Libya."

Iarbas, who could have hooted with joy, started to rise, when he became aware that the chair was rising with him. His sense of humor was dormant this night, nor was it strong enough at any time to share in a public laugh at his own expense. He gave a desperate wriggle and freed himself. Then drew himself up to seven feet of majesty, not including the headdress.

"We excuse you, O Queen," he said with lofty graciousness. "Go to your couch, and—ahem—sleep well."

Anna, who had sat just below the dais, came forward and put her arm about Dido. The ladies-in-waiting

joined her, and, with lagging steps, but head erect, as became a Queen even in extremity, she passed slowly from the room.

"I go!" announced Iarbas to Tadmelak. "Lead me forth."

His Guards rose from the couches. They were loath to leave, for they had enjoyed themselves in this lively company; knowing nothing of the cause of the gayety, they had found it contagious and laughed as heartily as the others. Their eyes petitioned to remain, but the King frowned and they followed him from the room.

"What is the matter with that woman?" demanded Iarbas as he strode beside Tadmelak through the courts. "I had heard that this Queen of yours was a woman of great energy. She looked as if she were better on a death-bed."

"Her energy is of the mind, O Iarbas. But she is very sad. And she exerts herself for her people all day and is weary at night."

"Well, let her mourn her dead husband. She has naught for any living."

"That we all know!" Tadmelak rejoiced in the success of Dido's strategy, and the humor of the hour was still with him, but he gave a short impatient sigh nevertheless.

Iarbas was treated with all honor. Torches flared on the ramparts. Guards stood at attention as if petrified at the sight of so much majesty and magnificence.

A line of soldiers stood on either side of the movable staircase and lighted his way; no one cared for the consequences should the overlord of Carthage topple headlong. He descended gingerly, two of his Guard holding his train.

"I want something to eat," he growled, as he stood in the street below. "Where am I to get it at this hour of the night?"

"At my house, O King. My larder is always full, and I have sent word to a few of my friends to join us in a revel."

"Haha!" The great King's good nature returned on wings. He smacked his lips. "Your friends speak Libyan, I hope? I saw Badbaal among them—an old friend of mine. What does he here?"

"He now dwells in our city and is one of the Queen's counselors—a valuable adviser, to whom we all feel indebted."

"Phœnicians know which way the wind blows! And he is wise enough, that man. What is Utica to Carthage? . . . And this is your house?" he asked a moment later.

The villa, on one of the lower slopes of the crescent hills, was brilliantly lighted. Slaves were running to and fro. The welcome smell of roast meats issued forth. The King indulged in his favorite smacking.

"You should be King of Carthage," he said with enthusiasm. "Not that white thing that is not even a

woman. And why in the name of Hammon should men elect a woman to rule over them? She may have a quick wit, for she got the best of me and the King of Tyre—I have heard that story; but what is she but a woman, after all? And a worn-out one at that? If you meditate usurpation, my friend, my army is at your disposal."

"We will discuss that later," said Tadmelak gravely. "As long as Dido lives—and it may not be long, alas! —we shall hold to our allegiance and serve her, for we too are men of our word, O King."

"Well, when the time comes, if another would claim the throne, let me know. You have won my favor."

And in high good humor he entered the villa.

[V]

When the doors back of the throne closed behind her Dido snatched the veil from her head and danced like a whirlwind about the little inner court. "Victory! Victory! Victory!" she cried. "He'll come no more! He'll come no more! I have saved my city, and would that I could rejoice openly with my people! Poor Tadmelak! I thought he would die of laughter! Well that he held his head down or that black giant would have suspected something was amiss. And how that chair must have pinched him! And how hungry he must be, for I told the steward to give him small portions. But I too am hungry. Hungry? I am starved! I go on wings to the supper prepared for us!"

And she raced her ladies up the stairs and down the corridor to her private apartments.

In a great room containing many of the beautiful works of art she had ravished from the palace in Tyre, a table was spread with a delicate repast of birds, vegetables, fruits, and sweets. The slaves were dismissed and Dido fell to with a hearty appetite, first washing the paste from her lips. The ladies toyed

with their portions. Anna alone followed her sister's example, for she had been too charged with anxiety to eat in the banquet hall.

"What if your ruse had failed?" she asked. "You could not conceal your loveliness, even if you did look bloodless, and the whiter a woman the more she might dazzle one so black."

"Nonsense." Dido helped herself to another quail. "I knew what I was about. These blacks have one standard of beauty, we another. If I were as dark as that little Terah who is always making eyes at Tadmelak my risk would have been greater, but even no white man wants a ghost for a wife. Oh, how I longed to laugh!"

"If you had not given the signal when you did we could not have restrained our own laughter much longer," said Jezebel, who ranked next to Anna among the ladies. She was a dark handsome young woman, one of the most vivacious and amiable of the court, but her brows met in a frown. "What a little fool that Terah makes of herself! As if Tadmelak had eyes for any but the Queen!" She watched Dido closely as she spoke. "Many would be willing to marry Tadmelak, but he would never look at that baby. If you will have naught of him, dear Queen," she added lightly, "tell him it is your royal will that he marry Jezebel."

Dido shot a glance at her. "Get him if you can," she said briefly.

"But unless you tell him once for all that you will have naught of him he will look at no other." Jezebel pouted her red lips.

Dido stood on little ceremony with her ladies when alone with them, and the talk was always intimate. The others were younger, barely twenty, but Jezebel had been a close friend since childhood, and when her husband died of a fever she invited her to the palace. No one was more popular. She was gay and amusing, childless, and not one to grieve long for the death of any man. She looked little older than the girls who were in attendance on the Queen until husbands approved by their parents should lead them to houses of their own. They had remained unwed longer than was common, for the young men had been too busy for more than casual love-making, and too prudent to undertake the responsibilities of a family until their coffers were replete.

Jezebel had long had her eye on Tadmelak. It was possible that Dido would forget her vow in time, and there could be no doubt of her choice. But if she did not—who handsomer and more desirable than Jezebel? When he talked with any woman at all save the Queen it was with her, and they exchanged lively sallies. She flattered herself that no ignorant girl, dumb from fright, could rival the charms and the arts of a handsome young widow. If only Dido would fall in love with some one else!

She sighed plaintively, but being a tactful young woman, changed the subject. "I heard an interesting piece of gossip at the banquet. One of the merchant fleets returned this afternoon from the Sicilian Isle, and Phalas with it. He told us that in Eryx he met that Trojan hero Æneas, who has had the most astonishing adventures. Seven long years has he been tossed hither and thither, driven into every port by adverse winds, and out again by hostile tribes. Just now he is in despair because he has lost his old father, whom, he says, he carried out of burning Troy on his back. He goes from the Isle to found a kingdom in Italy, some god or other having revealed this undertaking to him as his destiny foreordained. But seven years! I should think if it be true that he was born of the goddess Venus she might have taken better care of him. Phalas says he is a man of surpassing beauty, so perhaps there is some truth in that story. I remember the wandering minstrels used to sing of the siege of Troy and extolled the 'goddess-born' among others. I wonder why some gods are white and some black. It must be that Iarbas' father is as black as himself."

She rattled on, interrupted by the girls, who would hear more of that romantic Æneas, now grown into a legend. All had believed him dead long since, although the fleets, while trading in the Ægean, heard vague reports from time to time that Trojan ships had been sighted.

Dido gave them little heed. Her spirits had suddenly drooped. She had had much to think of since she ran, panic-stricken, from Tadmelak. But that pulsing moment, that handsome pleading face, rose and blotted out the memory of the farcical scene in the banquet hall, the effervescence of spirits that had succeeded it. And the impertinence of Jezebel to raise her eyes to Tadmelak!

She rose abruptly. "I find I am really tired and must sleep," she said. "Thank you all for abetting me." And she passed rapidly from the room followed only by Anna.

Her bedroom she had made as unlike as possible to the one she had occupied with Sychæus. Nothing there reminded her of her old life but the terra-cotta statue of Astarte and the jeweled jars and combs on her dressing table. The hangings were of Egyptian blue, a deep rich blue, and the bed of ivory and ebony was upheld by sphinxes richly carved and gilded. Even the embroidered figures on the tapestries helped her to forget her old bedroom, for they were of strange undecipherable hieroglyphics. The other furniture was as massive as the bed, and the floor covered by a carpet that matched the walls. It was a grand, an imperial room, fit for a Queen and none other, but it was the room of Dido of Carthage and far from the imaginings of Elissa of Tyre. Sometimes it oppressed her, and made her wonder if but three years had

passed since she had danced singing about that old room in sheer exuberance of spirits, or impatiently awaited the return of Sychæus from the Temple. She felt older by many years than three, for she was now a sovereign of vast responsibilities, and hardly a day passed that she was not called upon to make some decision affecting the welfare of her people.

True, no one had ever enjoyed being Queen more than she, and her uninterrupted good fortune often filled her with arrogant content. But happiness? Who knew better than Dido, once Elissa, that no woman could be happy without a husband?

Her tire-maidens awaited her. The laver was filled with warm perfumed water. She took her bath, a night-robe of embroidered muslin was slipped over her head, her hair braided for the night. The maidens retired and she was alone with her sister.

"Something is wrong with you," said the ever-observant Anna. "And not the coming of Iarbas alone. I noted that you looked strangely agitated when you came from the garden court so long after your ladies."

"Tadmelak was there," said Dido gloomily. "He would marry me."

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" Anna clapped her hands. "Did he find courage at last to ask you?"

"He is not lacking in courage! He would have asked me long since had I given him the chance. He caught me unaware."

"And what did you answer, dear sister? Oh, tell me you consented! Tell me at once or I shall die of curiosity!"

Dido was pacing slowly about the room. "No, I did not consent," she said frowning. "Why not, I hardly know. I never liked him so well. He was very exciting! He put his arms round me and I shivered!"

"But you will, Dido, you will! Promise me that you will send for him to-morrow and that we shall have a great wedding in the palace. Oh, Dido! To see you happy once more!"

"To-morrow would be too soon. That Iarbas, no doubt, will want to show himself off to the people. And what would he say when he heard that a woman who looked as if sinking into the tomb had taken a husband? He would guess the trick that had been played on him and return with an army."

"Then wait until he is gone, but no longer. It may be months before he hears. Such merchants as visit him will be sworn to secrecy, and the other cities warned. He will never come here again!"

"It may be. But I cannot make up my mind in a moment. And my vow! My vow!"

"No one holds a vow more sacred than I. But you are young and should be happy, and have a son to succeed you. Sychæus, could he return from the silence, would free you."

"A brown mummy on a shelf in a tomb," muttered

Dido. "I shall never see him again as anything else."

"Well, what else is he?" asked Anna practically. "And when you are married to Tadmelak you will not see even that. Sychæus was a great and good man, but he is dead. And did he live he would be growing older every day and less the lover. Youth should mate with youth."

"Oh, I heard all that this afternoon," said Dido passionately. "Go now, I would be alone."

After Anna had left her she climbed a flight of steps that led to a window high enough to look past the citadel wall. She stood there for an hour staring out over the sea. A storm had come up suddenly and the waves were hurling themselves at the outlying rocks. Black clouds raced across the starry heavens, but there was no lightning. Nothing but that vast heaving sea under a storm-tossed sky.

It was a night in tune with her mood, but if her mind was in a tumult of indecision her body was cold. The blood coursed no faster through her veins as she thought of Tadmelak. She sought to re-live that brief sweet moment of surrender, but could not.

Perhaps it is because I am tired, she thought, as she descended the steps and sought the warmth of her cushions. I will see him alone when that black oaf has gone, and if he makes me feel . . . perhaps . . . who knows. . . .

She yawned and fell asleep.

[VI]

On the following day Iarbas led a grand parade through the streets of Carthage. Mounted on his elephant, gorgeously caparisoned, and himself glittering in brass armor, somewhat disharmonized by his feathered headdress, his Guard on their camels, also decked out, behind him, and followed by Tadmelak at the head of the cavalry, swords flashing, he marched solemnly up one street and down another to continuous cheering.

The ladies stood on their balconies and pelted him with flowers. Men, women, and children from the lower quarter, lined the streets, pressed close against the houses. Some of the children howled with terror, for Iarbas indeed was a fearsome object, but were promptly muffled, and spanked later. Abbas led a contingent of sailors at the tail of the procession, and the rest had been permitted to go to the roofs if only to swell the volume of noise.

Dido, leaning on Anna and flanked by her ladies, stood on the citadel wall and facing the central street

of the city. She wore a shapeless white gown, the gold of her hair covered. Iarbas saluted her as one sovereign to another, and then hastily averted his eyes. The swarthy women of the people, bedighted in their gaudy best, found more favor in his sight. He was intensely gratified with his reception, and dismissed that pallid thing on the ramparts from his thoughts.

Three times in succession he paraded Carthage, and then, to the relief of all, hoarse with shouting, he turned his elephant toward the Eurychôrus, where he dismounted and made his way to the Temple.

The quadrangle of Baal-Hammon was as large as that of its prototype in Tyre, but the House was smaller. The former indeed was as much a public meeting-place as the great square itself. Its porticoes were double-aisled, it was grandiose in effect and richly decorated. Fountains cooled the air. Gates and altar were of bronze, carved in Cyprus, which had also contributed a statue of the god. The most noticeable difference from the Temple of Baal-Melkart was in the entire lack of glass. As yet there were no factories for glass-making in Carthage, and pillars at least would hardly stand transportation. Of her own store Dido had contributed many beautiful vases and lamps to the Temple of Tanit, but the decorations for that of the male god had been bought by Tadmelak in Egypt and the colonies.

There was no want of magnificence in the Temple of

Baal-Hammon, with its richly gilded pillars and glowing colors. Iarbas was visibly impressed. The quadrangle was crowded with a mass of moving color, but all were silent now out of reverence for the coming sacrifice. Even the venders of cooling drinks and the little miracle-working statuettes were subdued, although they did not hesitate to offer their wares.

Belator stood at the door of the sacred House in his long, loosely girdled linen robe, a little conical cap on his shaven head. He had been deeply displeased with the Queen the night before, although he understood and approved her subterfuge; but his was the right to sit on the other side of the royal guest, even if a trifle below. And not only had this detail been overlooked but she had retired without commanding Tadmelak to arrange an audience for the High Priest and other dignitaries of the court.

This was his hour, however, and he rejoiced that the Queen was not present to distract attention from himself.

As Iarbas entered the crowd made deep obeisance; it was impossible to prostrate themselves without lying one upon another. Not so the High Priest. He had seen that a space before him was clear (also freshly swept), and as the King made his way down the narrow lane between the people he fell face downward on the flags. Then he arose with dignity and led the way into the House.

Iarbas was conducted to the dais reserved for royalty, and as he had attended these sacrifices before in his honor he behaved with decorum, although unable to refrain from smacking his lips when the appetizing odors of roast bull assailed his nostrils.

He feasted later at the palace of the High Priest, in company with all the nobles, and departed at night-fall well-pleased on the whole with his visit to this handsome city on the edge of his empire. He decided to raise the tithe. These Carthaginians were wealthier than he had known.

[VII]

In a little room off her bedchamber Dido had erected an altar to Sychæus. If there were times when she forgot him (and no woman ever had cause to live more intensely in the present) there were others, when, driven by memories, or, she sometimes felt sadly, by a sense of duty, she covered the altar with offerings, and sat on the floor beside it recalling the happy years she had passed with her husband, his face, his deep voice, their hours of love together.

But those memories were growing dim. It was as easy to summon the vision of her kind father with his paternal kiss and fond words. Sometimes the two ghostly images melted one into the other, for they had been of an age and not unlike in appearance. But a vow is a vow, and to Dido a vow made in the presence of the goddess was doubly sacred. Sometimes she prostrated herself and implored Sychæus to return to her from the nether world if only for a moment and rend the dark veil growing dense and more dense that hung between her and that radiant past.

But Sychæus, wherever he was, made no sign.

I am still too young to stand alone, she thought at these times, panic-stricken. My lord should stand beside me. I am but a girl after all to direct these wise men as I will—whatever they may think—and decide so many questions for my people. At night we could talk intimately as of old, and he would soothe all my fears and advise me.

But spasms of humility with Dido were rare. And there were moments when she was filled with resentment. Once she shook her fist at the altar exclaiming, "If you had been more discreet you would be alive to-day. Why could you not have had sense enough to take a guard with you to the Temple? You knew every twist of Pygmalion's crooked mind. I would myself have ordered out the Guard to accompany you had I dreamed you would be such a fool as to go alone."

Then she burst into remorseful tears and ran to fetch fresh flowers and fruit for the altar.

On the morning after the departure of Iarbas a storm raged and confined her to the palace. The streets were swept with wind and rain, and even the Elders and Shophetim remained within doors. She sent word to her ladies to amuse themselves as best they could, and Anna was banished from the bedroom summarily.

"I would be alone," she said curtly. "I have much to think of."

And Anna departed, hoping her thoughts would be of Tadmelak.

They were of little else. Twice Dido approached the door of the altar-room, but turned away with a shrug. Of what use? A brown mummy in a winding-sheet on a shelf in a tomb!

For long she paced the room, her blood calm, her mind clear. No, she did not love Tadmelak, but she would love him, she believed, were he her husband. How could it be otherwise? And she wanted not only a husband but children. There should be an heir of her body to the throne of Carthage; and she envied all women more fortunate than she.

She guessed that Tadmelak too would like to found a family in Carthage and carry on his illustrious name. If she refused his love, and he relinquished all hope, no doubt he would marry either Jezebel or Terah—the latter, probably; Meisor would persuade him—and in time be happy enough. Men were practical creatures, and had much to think of besides love.

Could she look on and be content? Or would jealousy rend her? In Tyre she had given his respectful devotion little thought, save as it fed her youthful vanity, but during these three free adventurous years she had come to regard him as her own, and her eyes blazed as she pictured him the complacent husband of another woman. No! That should never be! No other woman should have him.

Then she must break her vow and marry him. She had tried him long enough; he was a determined man and would have his answer. Moreover, she was essentially fair and just, despite her moments of caprice. He must be put out of torment. She should have given him his answer long since.

She sighed. Would that she could love him! Would that that still inner flame would leap and blaze throughout her entire being, threatening to consume her until she gave herself to Tadmelak. Almost she would renounce her crown to feel love again. . . . Or was it that no woman could love twice as she had loved Sychæus? . . .

Then why had the memory of that great love grown so pale? Had Tadmelak's insight been deeper than hers? . . . A man old enough to be her father . . . love of habit and ignorance. . . .

A question confronted her suddenly. Were she still unwed and both Sychæus and Tadmelak her suitors, which would she choose?

Tadmelak!

No doubt of that. Handsome, young, ambitious, energetic, a born leader of men, and with the most versatile intelligence in Carthage, he would have been a fitter mate for a Queen, fitter mate for her youth.

And he would never be obliged to shave his head!

She stamped her foot with anger at this sudden lapse into frivolity and ran up the steps to the window.

The waves of the sea were running so high they looked like hills in the throes of an earthquake. Thunder shook the blackness above. Little wriggling snakes of fire darted hither and thither as if seeking objects for destruction. A ball of fire shot out of a bellowing cloud and hit the sea. She fancied she could hear a loud hissing. Would another strike her city? She feared lightning more than she feared any possible enemy, for a fire in Carthage might spread unchecked. There were but few springs on the peninsula. A rude aqueduct carried water from the lake to the cistern in every court, and beside the cisterns were large earthen jars always filled. But of what avail if a fire started on the roofs of those tall wooden houses? . . .

And then she gave a little cry. A flash of lightning had revealed a strange sight. Ships were buffeting that mountainous sea. She held her breath. Another flash unveiled one poised on the dizzy crest of a wave, one struggling in the black pit beneath.

What ships could they be? The fleet was safe in harbor. A part of it was ready to go on a voyage to the Phœnician islands in the Ægean Sea for corn, wine, oil, incense and other necessities; but Abbas would never sally forth in a storm. . . . And there was something unfamiliar about those ships, in the men she had glimpsed on the decks. Ah! That was it! Those men wore helmets.

What could it mean? Helmets meant warriors. What

enemy could meditate an attack on Carthage? When princes sought her hand their coming was duly announced. Could it be that wretch Pygmalion? But those were not Tyrian biremes. . . . The cities on the Persian Gulf had few ships, and never ventured beyond the Arabian Sea.

Deeply disturbed she ran down the steps and summoned a slave.

"Tell the Captain of the Guard to come to the entrance hall," she said; and wrapping a warm cloak about her, she ran down the staircase and walked rapidly through the cold rooms and corridors, skirting the courts. When she reached the entrance hall she ordered the doors to be opened.

The Captain ran up the terraces, crossed the threshold, and prostrated himself.

"Rise, Jerostratus," she said. "I would know if you have seen what I saw just now—strange ships on the sea?"

"I have, O Queen, and would that I had not, for they can bode no good. But I doubt if they outlive the storm—"

"Our ships have outlived many storms. Whence come they? What are they? Before you were a member of Pygmalion's Guard you sailed the seas as Captain. Have you ever seen aught like these?"

"I sailed but once, O Queen, and I saw Trojan ships —from afar—in the harbor of Delos, the Holy Island

of the Greeks. These resemble them, for they have tall gods on the prows. It may be that it is the fleet of the Trojan Prince Æneas—"

"But he was to go from the Sicilian Isle to Italy. I heard it but two days ago."

"True, O Queen, but he may have been driven from his course. Or, it may be, and that is what I fear, he would conquer Carthage first. It is said that he is a mighty god of war—"

"He must be a fool. Our fleet numbers three hundred and fifty ships and he has probably lost half of his —only twenty in all, so I have heard. Where is the Lord Tadmelak?"

"On the ramparts, O Queen. Would you speak with him?"

"No. Tell him the Queen knows her city is safe in his hands. Return now to your post."

It was two hours later and while she was sitting with her ladies—disinclined for further solitude—that five trumpet blasts sounded through the city. Jezebel sprang to her feet, overturning her embroidery frame.

"Then it *is* an enemy fleet!" she cried. "Carthage is attacked! Would that we could go to the roof and witness the battle!"

Here too was a flight of steps leading to a high window. Jezebel was at the top in a flash. "The rain has stopped and the sky is clear," she said eagerly. "Oh, Dido, let us go to the roof and watch our brave men

cut in pieces those brutes that would despoil our Carthage!"

Dido smiled and did not look up from the game of Egyptian draughts she was playing with Anna. "How bloodthirsty of you! I have no desire to be blown about, but go if you like."

Two of the girls went out with Jezebel, but the others preferred the warmth of the room. There were no glowing braziers in those cold halls, and the wind on the roof would pierce them through and through. They were excited but not frightened. Had they not many brave men to defend them? And no enemy could pass the gates of the citadel.

Half an hour later Jezebel ran in breathless.

"They entered the little bay on the north, and would have beached their ships but were driven off," she exclaimed: "There are many foreign-looking men, some with helmets, but they are confronted by our army, and there doesn't seem to be any prospect of fighting. Only the captains have landed. Would that Tadmelak would come and tell us all about it!"

"All in good time," said Dido placidly, although inwardly as excited as any. "It is Tadmelak's duty to report to me, and he will come before long."

He came almost immediately, wrapped in his dark cavalry cloak that was bound about his brow with a thong. His sword clanked at his side, and his belt bristled with javelins, but he was smiling.

"Do not prostrate yourself," cried Dido in alarm. "Those javelins might run you through. But speak. Who is this, our enemy?"

"It is a part of the Trojan fleet, O Queen, and the Captains vow they were driven off their course by the storm while sailing for the mouth of the Tiber. But although I have given them permission to remain in the shelter of the bay, the infantry will keep guard until they leave."

"And this Æneas we hear so much of? Is he with them? If he is he should be lodged in the palace, for he is of the royal house of Troy."

"He is not, O Queen, and they fear he has met death at last. He and seven ships are missing."

"He seems to have as many lives as an Egyptian cat, so no doubt he will turn up later. But you are right to keep strict guard over the Trojans, for it may well be they have designs on Carthage. Tell the Captains to wait upon me to-morrow in the Temple."

Tadmelak made obeisance and withdrew.

Men! thought Dido, as she returned to her draughts. He was too occupied with this new happening to remember that I was aught but a Queen!

[VIII]

THE next morning was cloudy and a fog clung dankly about the walls of the city, but the storm had passed. Dido was in no mind for the hunt, for Tadmelak would be at her side, his eyes ever questioning hers. In her own royal time she would give him his answer and not before.

But she must hold audience in the Temple of Tanit, for yesterday her people had perforce been neglected; moreover, she was curious to hear what those Trojans had to say for themselves.

She wrapped herself in a warm mantle of Tyrian purple, but her head was exposed, for only in the hunt did she show herself to her people uncrowned. The crown she wore to these audiences was a small one of topaz and pearls with long ear-drops, and she carried a plain gold wand. She well knew how to combine majesty with a certain simplicity, and inspire her people with love even while keeping them in a proper state of awe.

Followed by her ladies—huddled in their cloaks and

bitterly anathematizing the weather—and attended by mounted officers of the Guard, she walked rapidly up the street and ascended the hill where the Temple of Tanit stood in a luxuriant grove of palms. The great brass gates were open and the quadrangle crowded. Many left their daily tasks whether they had petitions to offer or not. This was the "people's court," and if they were not feasted, at least they could look at their Queen, hear her voice, perchance receive a smile of recognition.

As she entered they prostrated themselves, then lifted up their voices until the walls rang.

"Hail, O Queen! Hail, Dido our beloved! Hail, Dido Queen of glorious Carthage!"

Dido smiled benignantly and seated herself on a high throne in the center of the courtyard, her ladies disposing themselves about her, the Guard standing at attention behind. She noted that many of the nobles were present, drawn hither no doubt by a curiosity as great as hers.

Tadmelak stood a short distance away with a group of strange battered-looking men. Their eyes were fixed anxiously on this Queen, young and beautiful, but who might be as cruel as a Greek and give orders for a public slaughter. True, she looked very sweet, if proud, and her eyes, as she listened to the petitions of her people, were kind; but who could tell aught about a woman? All their sufferings were due to a

woman, and they sometimes hated the entire sex. For ten long years they had fought the Greeks in behalf of that "common curse of Troy." At first they had loved her and fought willingly enough; what else was a man born for but war? But to be shut up in a besieged town for years on end was another matter, and if Helen had thought of any one but herself she would have stolen out to Menelaus and ended it all. And instead of immolating herself on a pyre when Paris was killed, as any decent woman would have done, she married his brother; and then to save her wretched life made off with her first husband. Women were trollops and heartless at that.

The shivering girls cast their eyes about, prepared to lavish coy glances did any of the marriageable young men attend the audience, as sometimes happened. But the fog filled the court. They could hardly see three yards beyond the throne. Jezebel watched Tadmelak covertly, but he had eyes for no one but his Queen.

At the end of an hour Dido had disposed of her suppliants; who lingered, however, for they were palpitating with curiosity to hear the stories of these foreigners and the verdict of the Queen.

She raised her wand and Tadmelak came forward followed by an old man and three Captains. The refugees prostrated themselves and then stood regarding her humbly, although it was plain to be seen that three of them were seasoned warriors. They had removed

their helmets and their heads presented an odd sight to a peace-loving people: there was a broad band of scalp where the hair had been rubbed away.

Dido gave them a veiled piercing glance. But they looked harmless enough, true children of misfortune, and her eyes grew soft.

"Speak, Lord Tadmelak," she said. "The names of these wanderers who have cast themselves upon our mercy."

"They are Ilionus, Antheus, Cloanthus, and Sergestus, O Queen; the last three Captains of the fleet in which Æneas escaped from the Trojan land. Ilionus, who would speak for the others, was the friend of Anchises, father of Æneas and but recently dead. Has he your gracious permission, O Queen? I have told him to relate his story briefly—and, in truth, I think these Trojans came to Africa by chance, not intent."

Dido smiled into the tired eyes of the old warrior.

"Speak," she said in her rich husky tones, that would have put heart into any man. "If the storm drove you hither, and you come with no evil design, you shall meet with no further suffering at my hands."

Aged Ilionus spoke with quiet dignity.

"We come to your city driven by the gods' will, not by our own, O mighty Queen. We are wretched Trojans, storm-driven over all the seas for many years, and once more are forced to take refuge on unknown shores. A malignant Fate pursues us; where man or

seas have spared, the plague has devoured. And now this scanty remnant of our fleet, bound for the Italian land, is cast upon inhospitable shores and we are treated as enemies. What ill could men so few in number do a city so fortified and teeming? But we are debarred a resting-place on the beach; they rise in war and forbid us to set foot on the brink of this land."

He paused, being a man wise in the psychology of kings, and left it to his mild reproachful eyes to continue.

Dido flushed. "We are a young city," she said apologetically, "and have had no experience in war and little with foreign ships. Is it not wise, Ilionus, to regard every stranger as an enemy until he proves himself a friend?"

"True, O Queen, and I had been told by King Acestes of Eryx, who sought your hand in marriage, that you were wise beyond your years. Therefore must you be able to see at a glance the difference between innocence and guilt."

"I accuse you no longer, and would hear the rest of your story, your petition."

"Our petition is that the Queen in her mercy will feed and warm us, and permit us to repair our ships; that she will grant us permission to dwell in her city until we are rejoined by our King or are convinced of his death. Have the waves spared him he will lead us to Latium in Italy. If he has gone down into dispiteous

gloom we shall set sail for Sicily and ask hospitality once more of that King of Trojan blood, the good Acestes. But if Æneas our King, foremost of men in righteousness, incomparable in goodness as in warlike arms, is dead, in truth we care little what becomes of us."

"Your fate is indeed a sad one," said Dido pityingly. "I know well the history of your people, of that long cruel war, of your seven years' wandering with your brave King. Why go forth to buffet the seas again? Draw your ships ashore and remain here in my kingdom. Houses shall be built for you, and you will be treated with all kindness and respect by my people. It is likely, as we hope, your King has escaped the fury of the seas. The Lord Tadmelak will send messengers along the shore, for it may well be that he has been driven into one of our many bays."

And then a strange thing happened. The fog dispersed as if by magic. The sun shone forth. Every face in that large throng stood revealed.

But Dido had eyes for only one.

Standing by the gates was a man who towered above all others, and his beauty was astounding. His fair clustering curls were as bright as the sun, his face had a strange radiance, as if he were god rather than man and dowered with immortal youth; his eyes so brilliant that as they held Dido's startled gaze they seemed to her like blue stars, serene yet effulgent. His

features might have been chiseled in the heaven of the fabled gods of Greece, and they had endowed his tall form with both majesty and grace.

Goddess-born!

To Dido it was as if the earth turned under her feet, her blood's swift course halted and chilled. For a moment she believed she was about to faint, but her ever-vigilant mind sent an imperious message to her relaxing body. She drew herself stiffly erect.

"Who is this stranger?" she demanded in a loud clear voice. "Come forward and explain your presence in the Temple of Tanit."

But it did not need the joyous half-sobbing cries of the Trojans to inform her this man was Æneas.

Ilionus and the Captains ran forward and threw themselves on their knees, kissing his hands; but after a smile of welcome he waved them aside and strode forward to the throne.

"I am Æneas of Troy," he said.

"And welcome to my city," she replied gravely. Her voice was as controlled as her countenance, but strange things were happening in her breast. She felt as if her heart were a clogged mill-wheel, barely revolving; an icy stream was moving sluggishly through her veins. But she was a Queen and many eyes were upon her.

"Speak further, Æneas," she said.

"Ilionus has recounted our misfortunes and our purpose, O Queen. Cassandra had told my father Anchises

I was to found a royal line far away, but when we hid from the Grecian foe, sacking Troy, and slaying even King Priam at the altar, we built our fleet with no thought of anything but flight and seeking harbor on some near and friendly shore. We were driven hither and thither, storms raging, seas yawning for our weary wave-tossed bodies, driven from rest on land by unfriendly peoples. Juno, cruel and relentless, pursued us with her anger, for she is the enemy of all Trojans and jealous without end of the beauteous Venus my mother, to whom Paris awarded the golden apple. She has the ear of Jove her husband, but it must be that Venus prevailed again and again or we should all be shades on the dark shores of the nether world. We encountered every danger, met with disasters innumerable, and many of my good followers were swept overboard by hissing seas or beaten to death on the rocks. Misinterpreting the oracle on friendly Delos, who reminded me of my destiny to replant the seed of Teucer in the Italian land, we sailed for Crete, and there the plague burned through my troops like a fiery river of death. But it was there I was given the counsel denied me before. In a dream the household gods and Phrygian deities I had borne out of Troy stood before me in life-like guise and bade me go forth and found my kingdom in Italy, whence sprang Dardanus and Iasius, founders of Troy. Then I awoke, and lo! the gods were still there. It had been no dream,

but a gracious visitation. But even as I rose to prostrate myself they vanished, and I ran to make sacrifice and order the ships to put out to sea. We sailed in high hope, but alas, our adventures and disasters were still many, and horrors unspeakable. These I will relate in good time, O Queen, if you will. In Eryx we found shelter and welcome, but, ah! my father, my father! Anchises the best and wisest of men! He abandoned me for the dark abode of death, rescued in vain from peril and doom. But we mended our ships and sailed for the Italian land. My father, even in the throes of death, bade me obey the gods and return to the source of the great House of Teucer. If fair weather had held we should have sailed down the Tiber long ere this; but Juno bade the wild horses of Neptune spring hurtling from their sea-green caves, tossing their white manes, deafening our ears with their menacing shrieks, and tearing our ships with their teeth. They drove us upon the Libyan shore. With what purpose I know not. But again Venus my mother prevailed, and all have come safely to this realm of a great and merciful Queen. But now I met her in a leafy glade—a vision all too brief, alas!—and she gave me the good tidings that my comrades and ships were in harbor and bade me go fearlessly to the Queen of this fair city of Carthage. And I am here, O Dido, who thyself must be goddess-born, so beautiful and kind art thou."

And he knelt and kissed the hem of her robe, then rose and folded his arms, looking down upon her.

For the moment Dido made no answer. Her blood was coursing properly again but she was left speechless by this astonishing tale. Indeed a breathless silence reigned throughout the Temple; never had those practical Phœnicians thought to listen to such words from any mortal—or half-mortal! They had treated the pretensions of Iarbas with derision, but it was impossible to look on this man and doubt that the ichor of the gods ran in his veins. It was a new world that had opened to their wondering vision: gods in their heaven and gods of the deep fighting over a man who dwelt on earth like themselves! No people less romantic than the Phœnicians ever lived, but for the moment all the world seemed bathed in a rosy glow, life with its hard realities melted into a swimming dream, perfumed, iridescent, with clouds under winged feet and bodies light as air.

They came to themselves in a moment and sent forth a ringing cheer. That at least should be his reward for having entertained them with so marvelous a story. They hoped he would remain in Carthage if only that they might look at him, and perchance listen to those adventures in all their thrilling details.

Tadmelak alone was silent.

Dido found her voice.

She rose and held out her hand.

"Come with me to the palace, Æneas, goddess-born," she said with the air of one sovereign offering hospital-

ity to another. "And your friends with you. There shall you lodge while you gladden us with your presence. And many bulls and sheep, much bread and wine, shall be sent to your sailors, who will camp on the beach for the present." She turned her head. "You will see to this, my Lord Tadmelak?"

Tadmelak bowed low and withdrew.

Her hand resting lightly on that of Æneas, she led him forth from the Temple, down the street, and up the hill to the palace.

[IX]

During that short walk Æneas told Dido that he had brought his son with him and that his wife Creüsa had been lost in the flight through burning Troy. The little Iulus was with his Captains in the bay where they had beached their ships, and he begged that the child be sent for and housed in the warmth of the palace. Nor did he forget to inform her there were many women in the fleet, the wives of his friends, who had bravely endured every hardship. Messengers were dispatched at once to bid them all to the palace, and slaves ordered to put braziers in the spare bedrooms, and a light repast.

"There shall be a great banquet to-night in your honor, Æneas," said the Queen as they parted at the foot of the great central staircase. "Until then rest and forget all you have suffered."

"But never your gracious kindness, O Dido. It is as if I had risen on wings from the dark nether world into the heaven of the gods."

"Dido does but as she would be done by," she said

formally. "The palace is yours. Do with it as you will."

The High Steward conducted Æneas up the stairs, and Dido was surrounded by a stammering group. Jezebel's eyes were dancing, the girls were so excited their words tumbled over one another without coherence. Anna alone was solemn.

Every adjective expressive of extravagant admiration was hurled at the disappearing Æneas. Dido smiled absently and let them jabber unrebuked. She kept them with her until the afternoon levee, and even invited them to attend her in her bedchamber while she rested for the banquet. An hour was given to the High Steward.

The feast for Iarbas had been magnificent, but this night's far surpassed it. The tables were covered with purple satin fringed with gold. The floor was strewn with flowers, the hangings were embroidered with peacocks, their spreading tails bright with jewels. Only gold plate adorned the tables and much of it glittered with precious stones. Maidens, swinging censers, perfumed the air.

Among the guests were certain women faded and gaunt. But they were as gorgeously attired as any, for every lady in Carthage had sent a slave running to the palace, arms laden with garments to gladden the eyes of those weary and still dazed women, more accustomed to rags than decent covering.

The Trojan men had been provided with long trail-

ing mantles which they wore awkwardly. For many years more than seven they had been used to the brief tunic of the soldier, and, fearing to trip, they had knotted the garment about their waists, leaving their sinewy legs bare.

The Carthaginians strove to put these strange men and women at their ease, but the Trojans made scant response; life had made them grim. However, they were thankful to have reached this blissful haven, and were polite if not expansive.

There was a breathless hush as the doors behind the throne opened and Dido and Æneas entered followed by Tadmelak—looking grimmer than any Trojan—and the ladies of the court.

When Æneas had fled from his house in Troy slaves had accompanied him carrying chests hastily packed by the thoughtful Creüsa. Those chests had been seldom opened, but to-night he was enabled to appear in all the splendor designed for attendance upon Priam in the halls of Troy. He wore a suit of flexible gold armor modeled to fit his light, graceful but muscular figure as if he had been poured into it. Heavy gold bracelets were on his arms and a band of beaten gold circled his bright head. He looked more like a god than ever and the women trembled so they could hardly get up after they had prostrated themselves. Some of the men sneered, but they were dazzled nevertheless.

Dido was no less superb and arresting. Her slender rounded body was swathed in gold tissue, almost concealed under ropes of jewels, and a train of Tyrian purple stiff with gold embroidery hung from her shoulders. On her head, never higher, was a diadem blazing with diamonds and rubies. Her eyes shone like black stars, her full curved mouth had never been more red, and there was a rare color in her cheeks.

Her throne was of gold to-night, and beside it a golden chair for the Trojan hero. On either side, on the first broad step of the dais, were chairs for Tadmelak and Belator, unforgotten to-night. He wore his court robe of buff cloth, Tadmelak, Egyptian green with the deep jeweled collar of his order.

The Queen and her guest took their places. She raised her wand and the company disposed themselves on the couches.

Æneas sighed. "Such splendor I have not seen since I last entered the banquet hall of my beloved King in a palace now dust and ashes—and the charred bones of Priam among them!"

"You must banish those sad thoughts, my friend," said Dido smiling. "What is past is past, and your troubles are over."

"It is true that in your presence the past grows dim, O Earth's kindest of Queens." Sadness vanished from the eyes of wondering admiration he bent upon her. "To me you are not goddess-born but a goddess in

truth, and I fear to wake and find Carthage a dream."

Dido blushed and lowered her long black lashes with their golden tips. "I am no goddess, Æneas, but a daughter of Mattan, which pleases me as well," she said lightly. "But where are those gifts you promised me? I would have them now, for I am a very woman and love to receive presents."

"My slave will bring them if you send the word to my apartment. Summon him, O Queen, that I may lay my humble offerings at your feet."

The slave of Æneas, still in tatters, entered and spread the gifts on the table from which the dishes had been hastily removed. The company rose to stare and Dido clapped her hands and uttered little ecstatic cries, as Æneas turned them over. His voice trembled slightly as he handed them one by one to the Queen.

"This," he said, lifting a richly broidered mantle sewn with golden emblems, "was worn by Andromache, wife of great Hector, who now dwells in the Chaonian land; where, in a new Trojan city, Helenus, son of Priam, holds kingly sway. Fate took me there in my wanderings, and she pressed it upon me."

He shook out a shimmering veil broidered with saffron lilies. "This was oft worn by Helen, to whom we owe all our woes. She bore it with her when she fled from Sparta with Paris, but wearied of it in due course and gave it to my lost Creüsa.

"And this scepter, O Queen, was once fair Ilione's,

eldest of Priam's daughters. And this string of round pearls, this double crown of jewels set in gold—my friend Achates rescued them when the Greeks entered Troy, and brought them to my house. There were many other precious heirlooms, but some I presented to the good King Acestes of Eryx, others to the oracle on the Holy Island of Delos. Accept these, O Dido, the last relics of splendor of a House that is no more."

Dido stood up and unclasped her train, letting it fall negligently over the back of the throne. She made an imperious gesture to Jezebel, who ran forward and draped the white shoulders of the Queen in the mantle of Andromache. Dido tossed her crown aside, and over her head Jezebel hung the veil of that Helen whose face had launched a thousand ships, and adjusted the high diadem of Ilione. About her arm Dido twisted the rope of pearls, and grasped the wand that had been carried by a mere princess.

Then she turned to Æneas, who stood staring at her with parted lips, and infused her deep tones with sweetness, yet slightly commanding withal.

"For this night, goddess-born, worthy scion of the great House of Teucer, see in Dido but the living emblem of all that is lost. Behold in me for this hour Troy risen from her ashes. My people are your people and the past is not. You are presiding in the hall of Priam, and no enemy is at the gate. Carthage is unborn, and Dido a daughter of your King, who receives

the guests of the palace with Æneas at her side. . . . What is life but fantasy? In dreams we find, perchance, the reason for living. Dream with me for this hour, Æneas, and be happy."

Æneas had had little time in his short life to be anything save a soldier, but he was also a prince. He bowed as low as a man may when his midriff is encased in metal, and his voice was hoarse as he replied:

"No more gracious act was ever born in mortal mind, O royal Dido, and I bow to your will. For to-night care is banished and the dead are risen. Troy feasts beside Troy as of old, and I would this hour might last forever."

They exchanged tremulous glances and seated themselves once more. The company did likewise, and for a time there was silence. All had been deeply impressed, if a little perplexed. It was difficult for an unimaginative people to rise on the wings of fancy, and perhaps one secret of Dido's power was this gift of the gods. Her imagination had driven her from Tyre to build a great city whose long and glorious career she foresaw, if dimly. And to-night that imagination soared high above a company assembled to meet and make merry, perchance to listen to the adventures of this bewildering hero, half-god, half-man. They assumed that Dido was merely bent on making herself charming to the goddess-born, whom she secretly compared to that grotesque son of Hammon she had been forced to en-

dure two nights since. A contrast truly! No wonder she was in the best of humors.

Tadmelak, despite his great abilities, had little imagination himself, but he alone understood something of this exalted mood of Dido. That was no mere act of graciousness, nor was she moved solely by those lovely relics of a valiant and unhappy people. She had articles quite as fine in her own wardrobe. No, it was that damnable hero of god-like beauty who had wafted her up into the realm of poetry. He felt as if the palace were sinking under him. His hopes had been high until this morning, but a terrible doubt had stabbed him as he turned his head and beheld that glorious creature, bathed in visible radiance, standing at the gates. And he had turned his head again and seen Dido's face. Her immediate self-control had not deceived him. She had almost fainted with emotion.

For the first time in his life Tadmelak experienced black hatred. Despite his energy he was easy-going and philosophical, and had taken with a shrug such minor disappointments as must visit all mortals. Tormented as he had been by his love for Dido he had rarely doubted that persistence must win in the end, for he had no rival. Even if he could not waken love in her before marriage, he believed the time was not far off when she would make up her mind that a son of hers must inherit the throne. He had had a long

talk with Anna the day before and she had given him hope.

He had moved her in the garden. Oh, no doubt of that! And she passionately loved Carthage, the city of her creation. When she bent that clear mind of hers to the task and placed her vow in the scales with Carthage it would weigh lightly.

But in those rapt eyes he could see no remnant of a calm far-seeing brain behind. It was filled, or so it seemed to him, with a dazzling golden mist. If she did not already love this man whom she had met but a few hours since it was only because she was still shocked and dazed, still groping in that high realm of dreams where thought was suspended.

And he could do nothing!

He could not out-dazzle this Trojan, beautiful beyond all men, son of the Goddess of Love; with his record as a mighty warrior, his long chapter of misfortunes to move the soft heart of a woman. Willingly would he have run him through, but the man was the guest of his city, and he was no assassin. The "goddess-born" looked as if he didn't have an idea in his head beyond soldiering, but what meant that to any woman wooed by an incomparably romantic figure who looked as if he had descended from the Olympus of the Greeks?

What chance had a mere practical man of affairs, with no looks to speak of, against this man whether

he spoke lies or truth? His only hope lay in Æneas himself. The man was struck dumb by Dido's beauty —who was not?—and grateful, as well he might be, but he did not look to Tadmelak's shrewd appraising eyes like a man who had fallen head over heels in love. Indeed he looked almost phlegmatic as he rapidly disposed of four pigeons and a bowl of peas.

And there was no doubt that he took his "destiny foreordained" very seriously, and would set forth on the morrow were his ships in condition. Tadmelak resolved that every shipbuilder in Carthage should go to work with the dawn.

[X]

The younger men in general were unimpressed and resentful. A number of them were grouped at the end of one of the long tables and they expressed their views freely under cover of the rising chatter.

"I'll wager Iarbas has more brains than he," said Evagorus scornfully. "If he has had so many adventures why hasn't he more expression? He looks more graven image than man, and as if he had never experienced an emotion, much less a thought."

"Oh, Venus has nursed him!" exclaimed Gê, another hopeless worshiper of Dido. "That beauty she created must never be marred. No doubt as he sleeps each night she smooths out his lines with unguents, after the fashion of our women. And she must have an especial ointment for his scalp for it shows no mark of the helmet."

"She did her work well," sighed Pedai, still another victim. "What beauty! Baal-Hammon! What beauty!"

"Only old Solomon could have done him justice," grinned Iopas; and he raised his lyre and parodied naughtily:

"Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness in armor of gold with bright dew on his hair—forgetting to dry it properly after the bath?

"Thou art all fair, O goddess-born; there is no spot on thee because thy slave has doused sweet waters over thee.

"Thy cheeks are as a bed of fragrant ointment, thy lips dropping the grease of the pigeon.

"Thy legs are as pillars of muscle rendered strong by pacing the ramparts while glaring in impotent wrath on the Greeks below.

"Thy mouth is most sweet with the fragrance of peas stewed in onions, even though thou smackest not thy lips like Iarbas.

"Thou art beautiful, O my love; terrible as an army with tattered banners.

"Thy neck is as a tower of ivory, unwashed this morn, but well scrubbed for the banquet.

"Thy hands are as ivory talons reaching for a steak of venison; thy belly is as naught but skin itching under carved metal that rasps in many places.

"Oh, that thou couldst scratch, my Immortal, my beloved!"

The roars of laughter that punctuated this effusion attracted the attention of Dido.

"What are you singing, Iopas?" she called. "Come

near and repeat it, for I would have my guest make merry with you."

"Baal!" muttered Iopas. "Fools, to laugh so loudly! What am I to do?"

"Sing the song of the woman who had ten husbands—"

"That is too vulgar. Dido would banish me from the hall."

"Then sing of the guinea hen who lost her rooster and ran round in a circle till she fainted and dreamed she was pursued through the mountains by a god, who turned into a lion and ate her."

And Iopas went forward and sang the old folk song, freely improvising to make it as funny as possible.

Æneas listened politely, but it was evident that he was not amused.

No sense of humor, thought Iopas. It needed only that.

He was dismissed graciously by Dido, and the dancing girls were summoned. Æneas regarded them with approval, if with little enthusiasm. Even so had he seen lovely nymphs in the halls of Troy.

He had spoken seldom, for in truth he had been almost as hungry as Iarbas on a similar occasion, and it was long since he had tasted dainty fare. The tables of Acestes had been laden with roast ox and sheep; filling, but not wholly satisfying to a naturally delicate palate.

Bowls of wine wreathed with roses were brought in, and Æneas commanded the respect of even the ribald young men by the potation he poured down his ivory tower. A faint flush mounted his bronzed cheeks, his eyes sparkled. He looked more man than god, and he began to talk rapidly to Dido.

She regarded him with an indulgent smile. "You promised you would relate your adventures," she said. "What better time than now? Will you not delight a people who have known nothing of war and little of adventure, but who are always eager to hear? They are the most intelligent people in the world—south of Phrygia," she added politely, "and would listen with rapt attention."

Good food and wine had banished all sadness from the heart of Æneas, and he was a great talker when fairly started. He had told the tale of his wanderings more than once. But he was modest withal.

"If Dido commands," he said almost humbly. "Would you hear aught of the great war?"

"Begin with the sack of Troy and your flight," said Dido eagerly. "All wars must be much alike, and then began your real adventures."

"As you will, O Queen. The great gods know that terrible picture lives in my memory as if it happened but yesterday."

And for two hours he talked without pause, or only to refresh himself from the bowl.

Once Iopas muttered, "His tongue is hung in the middle and wags at both ends," but the company was as rapt as Dido had promised. The gods had endowed Æneas with eloquence, and when his mind was quickened, his flow of words was both graceful and dramatic.

His picture of the rolling tides of flame, the toppling towers of Troy, the despairing shrieks of women, the groans of the dying, the hoarse shouts of the victors, the murder of Priam at the altar, his impulse to kill Helen, clinging to the shrine of Vesta, but diverted by his mother, and of Cassandra, Priam's virgin daughter, bound in chains, was all so vivid that the elegant ladies of Carthage gasped and screamed faintly, and even the men were shaken. As he described his flight with his old father on his back—embracing the household gods—grasping little Iulus by the hand, Creüsa following as best she could, but lost in the mêlée, his frantic search for her later, regardless of falling walls and enemy spears dripping blood, only to be confronted by her ghost, all the women wept and two fainted.

"I'll wager it was no ghost," whispered Iopas. "Glad enough she must have been to be rid of him. He must have talked her to death long before. No doubt she is living in peace with some one who thinks less of himself."

But even Iopas was thrilled by the adventures of that little band that had built a fleet in a secret bay

and launched forth into the great unknown. He shuddered with the rest when Æneas, seeking space for an altar on the Thracian shore, tore up the young trees to find the roots dripping with the dark blood of the murdered Trojan Polydorus, and warned by a hollow voice from the tomb to flee the land.

In some ports he found shelter, but they were as mere oases in a vast unfriendly desert, and horrors were many. After battling with a storm that lasted three days and nights they came to the shores of a Greek island, mainly inhabited by Harpies, "winged things with maidens' countenances, clawed hands, and faces wan with hunger." They had killed oxen and prepared a feast, when the Harpies "swooping awfully from the mountains and shaking their wings with loud clangor, plunder the feast and defile everything with unclean touch, spreading a foul stench, and uttering dreadful cries." Altars to the gods availed not, nor swords, nor spears. The obscene creatures were too much for the brave Trojans and they fled to the ships.

The ladies held their perfume bottles to their noses during the recital of this episode, but when Æneas described his visit to "New Troy," in the northern lands of Greece, and his interview with the sad Andromache, they were rapt again and wiped away tears.

But this was a pleasant interlude.

Once more stormy seas and dire adventure between "pitiless Charybdis and Scylla prisoned in her eyeless

cave." An occasional fair haven, and then his glimpse of the Cyclops Polyphemus under the thunders of Ætna. The foulness of the Harpies was as nothing to the tale of that monster and his dwelling, related to Æneas by an Ithacan, companion of Ulysses, who had been cast upon the Sicilian shore long since.

"It is a house of gore and blood-stained feasts, dim and huge within. Himself he is of high stature, and knocks the lofty sky. He feeds on the flesh and dark blood of wretched men. I myself saw when he caught two of us with his great hand, and, lying back in the middle of his cave, crushed them on the rock, and the courts swam and splashed with gore. I saw when he champed the flesh oozing with dark clots of blood, and the warm limbs quivered under his teeth. Yet not unavenged. For so soon as he, gorged with his feast and buried in wine, lies with bent neck, sprawling over the cave, in his sleep vomiting gore and gobbets of wine, we, with prayers to the gods, and with parts allotted, pour at once all round him, and pierce with a sharp weapon the huge eye that lies sunk single under his savage brow, in fashion of an Argolic shield or the lamp of Phœbus; and at last we exulting avenge the ghosts of our comrades."

The music of the goddess-born's voice as it rolled through the great room in no wise softened the horrors of that recital. Women screamed lustily and ten fainted. But the men listened with open mouths, stirred

as never before. They had heard tales of plunder and warfare from their fathers, but they were nursery tales to this. The veins swelled in their temples and their breath came short. But they drew a long sigh of relief when Æneas told them that after one look at the blind roaring Cyclops and his gigantic subjects, suddenly appearing on a hill-top, the Trojans took to their ships and raced away.

They barely listened to his pleasant description of the court of Acestes, the deep melancholy tones as he related the death of his father, for they regarded it as an anticlimax. But they cheered him as he finished.

Æneas turned to Dido.

"I am weary and would rest," he said.

Dido rose and dismissed the company.

[XI]

Dido, exhausted, slept heavily, and awakened to strange sounds in the morning. The corridor without rang with the voices of children and echoed to their running feet. She rang the hand-bell that stood on a table beside the bed and her tire-maidens came in.

"What is that noise?" she asked sleepily. "Children? I know of but one child in the palace—the son of the Trojan prince."

"There are eight or ten of them, O Queen, and how women bore and reared children on those ships passes understanding. But they are strong enough, the gods know, and race about like wild things of the forest. We bade them be quiet but we might as well have rebuked the winds of heaven. Spoiled brats they all are, and that little Iulus their leader in all naughtiness."

"Children in the palace of Dido," murmured the Queen dreamily. "But I like the sound. Let them be. And bring here to me the little Iulus."

The child ran in a moment later, a boy of ten and a small replica of his father. A golden mane hung

over his shoulders, his dark blue eyes were sparkling, his form straight and manly.

For a moment he stood abashed, then frowned impatiently and half turned to flee, when Dido sat up among her cushions and smiled.

"Come here, Iulus," she said. "I am the Queen and your father's host. You would not have me tell him you have forgotten your manners?"

Iulus ran straight to her and flung himself into her arms.

"If you are the Queen you may kiss me," he said, "for I am the son of a King. Those other women that fled with us from Troy would kiss me but I will not permit it, for they are ugly. My mother is dead, but you must be as beautiful as she and you are a Queen, so you may kiss me."

Dido kissed and fondled him rather awkwardly, for she had always avoided children. But she felt a secret rapture, which she had no mind should be observed by her staring women.

"And you would live with me here in my palace?" she asked, pinching his cheek.

"Oh, yes, and forever. I am tired of the seas, and of not having enough to eat. I ate so much yesterday that I was sick and my nurse put me to bed. This morning I had enough but not too much, and I am very happy. I love these long halls where I can run and shout. One may not run on the deck of a ship

and sometimes I almost forgot how. May I and my father live here with you always?"

"You are very welcome for as long as your father would remain in Carthage," said the Queen stiffly. "But go now, for I would dress. There are sweets on that table if you can find room for anything more."

Iulus helped himself liberally and ran out, his high piercing voice calling to his comrades. A moment later there were wild shrieks in the corridor, and Dido inferred they were fighting over the sweets.

"Take out the rest," she said hurriedly. "And bid them go down and play in one of the courts. It is pleasant to hear children in the palace, but like many other things a little goes a great way."

After her toilette was completed and the women had retired, Anna entered. She looked searchingly at Dido, but was met with a blank stare.

"The gentlemen of the court would know if you will hunt this morning," she said.

Dido shrugged. "I did not think to dress for the hunt and am not minded to dress again. Moreover, I am tired after all the excitement of yesterday and sitting so late at the banquet. Send them word to go without me. No doubt it will amuse our guests."

Anna dispatched a slave with the message and returned. Dido was standing at a window overlooking one of the courts, where the children were pulling up flow-

ers and examining the roots. Her eyes were dreamy and absent as she turned them on her sister.

"They are naughty children," she said softly. "But how wonderful to be a child without thought or care! And how happy they must feel to be on firm land again after tossing about on angry seas and sharing all those terrible adventures. It is a wonder they are not little old men and women."

Anna was frowning down on the little Trojans. Unlike her sister, she cherished no secret love of children.

"Brats!" she exclaimed. "The palace will be upside down as long as they remain. Astarte be thanked they go soon. The hammers are ringing down in the dockyards, and our men work quickly."

Dido made no reply, but turned to the window again.

Anna had lived too long with this variable sister of hers to be lacking in tact, but to-day she was uneasy and apprehensive, and she spoke impulsively.

"Will you not give Tadmelak his answer to-day? Why not celebrate the visit of these Trojans with a great wedding in the palace?"

"Tadmelak!" murmured Dido. "Tadmelak!" She turned abruptly with glowing eyes. "I shall never marry Tadmelak," she said.

"You have fallen in love with that Trojan prince—or King as he calls himself!" Prudence flew to the winds. "A man you never saw before yesterday! A man who has not wooed you. And—so these strange

women tell me—thinks of naught but of hastening to found a kingdom in Italy."

Dido drew herself up proudly. "No man loved by Dido would fail to love her in return. He loved me at once even as I him. He will remain in Carthage and reign at my side."

"And Tadmelak? After all these years of devotion! There would have been no Carthage, no flight from Tyre, but for Tadmelak. It is he that should reign at your side."

"He knows well I do not love him. And Astarte watched over me and breathed into my ear to give him no promise when he surprised me in the garden. And love comes as it will. I would have summoned it for Tadmelak, but it held ever aloof."

"And your vow?"

"You would have me break it for Tadmelak. Why not for Æneas, son of a kingly house, and a hero whose praises shall be sung by poets evermore?"

Anna hastily changed the subject. "And what leads you to believe this hero loves you? You have not seen him for a moment alone."

"Eyes speak even as tongues. We love each other and our love was foreordained. What else drove him to find refuge in Carthage instead of in Utica, a nearer port for one leaving Eryx for Italy and driven from his course? I have waited for him long and he has come!"

Her eyes were flashing, her face lit with arrogant

triumph, but her mouth soft withal. She clasped her hands behind her head and rocked her body to and fro.

Anna was a practical soul. Tadmelak had long been her choice, but she accepted with finality the all too obvious fact that his cause was now hopeless. No one understood Dido as she did, that passionate nature, those profound emotional depths, that driving determined will. If Dido had fallen in love again, as well try to bottle up Mount Ætna as turn that wild imperious spirit from its course.

And her love for Sychæus—but the love of any loyal young girl for a kind and devoted husband—could be as nothing to the awakening passion she must feel for this god-like being. Even she had stared at him agape and for a moment wished she were beautiful and enchanting.

She shrugged her thin little shoulders. "So be it, then. And perhaps it is as well. Whomsoever you married you would make of Iarbas a deadly enemy, and he has thousands upon thousands at his command. There are other savage kings who may cast their eyes upon Carthage, and I fear ever the vengeance of Pygmalion. This Æneas is a great warrior, and these friends of his can be little less. All that is to be known of the science of warfare they must know. Our men know nothing of war and our army is a joke. These black barbarians know only the ruder elements of warfare, and

although our numbers would be but little augmented, the Trojans would outwit them."

She paused and looked at Dido, who was gazing at her rapturously.

"Oh, Anna! Anna!" Her voice was high and exultant. "It needed only your wisdom to convince me. I had lived in a dream since yesterday, but this morning I have been beset with misgivings. Not for Tadmelak. A man must take what comes to him. My vow! Had I married Tadmelak it would have been for the good of Carthage: if I left an heir to reign after me there would be no strife among my people. But to break it for love alone—that seemed to me unworthy of a daughter of Mattan, and of a Queen whose subjects should be her first thought. But you have opened eyes blinded by love, and Carthage will wed Æneas even as I."

"But you must make sacrifice before you decide upon this great step," said her sister, anxious once more. "You must appeal to Astarte-Tanit, and listen to her counsel."

Anna, pious as she was, had a strong suspicion that when appealing to the gods for advice the prostrates heard what best suited their purpose. But in any case the gods must be propitiated.

Dido had clapped her hands and a slave lay face downward on the floor.

"Send word to have the Temple of Tanit cleared of

all but the High Priestess," she commanded. She adjusted her crown hastily, for she would not have time to return before the public audience, wrapped a light mantle about her, and a moment later was leaving the palace with Anna.

[XII]

A SOLEMN silence reigned in the Temple. Doves had been sacrificed on the altar, and Dido had poured a libation between the horns of a white heifer. The High Priestess and Anna had retired, leaving her alone before the statue of Tanit: a brazen statue inlaid with gold, on the head a silver crescent, a spindle and scepter in either hand.

Dido had given much thought to this Temple of her beloved goddess, determined it should outshine her sanctuary in Tyre. If less exquisite, it was richer in color; calcite lamps on the pillars, shaped like galleys, were Egyptian red like the hangings on the wall. Foreign votive offerings were few, for Carthage was still a young city, but many of the palace treasures stood in the tabernacle, and doors and panels were of graven brass.

Dido, who had lain at the feet of the goddess, rose and wrung her hands, her eyes perplexed and questioning.

"'O Life! O Death! O Mystery!'" she muttered.

"Who am I and whither do I go? Does happiness await me, or shall my being be riven in twain once again? Is death ever the twin of love, or do the gods relent and permit two mortals to find happiness in each other without end? Oh, I fear! I fear! Why, when the omens have been favorable, should I doubt at this moment?"

She buried her face in her arms, then bent them sharply to her sides and lifted her palms.

"I must address thee as of old, O Astarte. Not yet am I used to calling thee Tanit, when for so many years, my kind, my beloved goddess bore the name given her by my people. Then tell me, O Astarte, shall this love of mine be blest? My father and all Tyre showered blessings upon me when I married Sychæus, and the gods willed it, yet was he taken from me, murdered at the altar of Baal. How shall I know that even do the gods sanction this marriage with Æneas, it may not be their will to torture me in the end? Or was Sychæus sacrificed that I might wed one I love as I knew not how to love then? O Astarte, I beseech thee give me answer! Unveil the mystery of the future. Oh, that it may be I am to wed this man and be happy for all the years of my life! But if not, thou must tell me, for never will I suffer again as when I filled the palace of Tyre with my lamentations. Death alone could assuage my agonies did I love and lose Æneas. That still inner flame never quickened for Sychæus, but as a temple is my body lit by it now and scorched with its fire. Never

before have I loved with all that is in me, but it is a love that makes me more sad than triumphant. I must know! I must know! I could live on for Carthage did I send him from me to-morrow, but never! never! had I known his love."

She looked beseechingly into the emerald eyes of the goddess. A ray of sunlight piercing a high uncovered window glanced across the face of Tanit and gave them a faintly mocking expression. Dido shuddered and covered her face once more.

"O Astarte! Astarte!" she whispered brokenly. "Be kind to thy Elissa who has loved thee so long."

She raised her eyes again. A cloud was floating across the face of the sun, and the eyes of the goddess were calm and beneficent. For long she remained still and rapt. The Temple was heavy with silence. Not a murmur from the gathering crowd without penetrated the brazen doors.

Gradually her face illumined, a smile of exaltation spread over her features until they were bathed in radiance.

"O Astarte! Astarte!" she breathed. "Thou hast spoken. In my soul's inner soul I heard thee speak, and I go forth unafraid to my destiny."

She prostrated herself and then went out to listen to the petitions of her people.

[XIII]

TADMELAK held a brief consultation with his friends. It was his plan, conceived during a sleepless night, to keep Æneas from prowling about the palace by filling every moment of his time until the nightly banquet. Dido's own time was fairly occupied, and she would hesitate to give her ladies cause for gossip by summoning him to a private audience. In eight days his ships would be ready to leave the harbor—and the gods speed him straight to Italy!

The young men fell in with the plan readily. They had long since resigned themselves to the prospect of Dido's ultimate marriage with Tadmelak, but never should this stranger even woo her if they could prevent it. They had not a suspicion that she loved him, for they were accustomed to her royal indifference to the needs of mere woman; but as those two had sat together on the dais last night they had looked so mated in imperial beauty, in godlike authority, that her young adorers had been filled with apprehension. Anything might happen if he stayed long enough.

After the hunt Æneas was marched about the city and shown the public buildings inside and out. He received the homage of the Elders and sat for an hour listening to their words of wisdom. Badbaal expounded the mysteries of election by the people; mysteries indeed to a Trojan and by no means exciting his approval.

Belator sacrificed a bullock in his honor and another hour was consumed in the Temple of Baal-Hammon. After the midday meal in the villa of Tadmelak he was allowed to rest until the levee of the ladies was half over and then led forth again. This time he inspected the dockyards, and here no art was needed to make him linger. He forgot for the hour the haunting image of Dido and examined his ships eagerly, bidding his sailors refresh and amuse themselves, but be ready to leave on the moment.

He had slept ill the night before, the reproachful vision of Creüsa chasing Dido through his dreams. He was not a man to do much thinking, save when planning for his own safety and that of his followers, but he was young and ardent, and such beauty and bewildering charm as Dido possessed he had never encountered. He did not ask himself if he were falling in love, for never yet had his gaze turned inward, but he was aware of a vague prompting that the sooner he got away from Carthage the better. His high destiny was to found a kingdom in Italy that would restore the fallen glories of the House of Teucer, and although no

man had ever been less harried by ambition he was exalted with the thought that he alone had been selected for this glorious mission. Moreover, he was the humble servant of the gods and obeyed their behest in all things. That he was goddess-born made his duty the plainer.

He had married his Creüsa when he was little more than a boy, and he had been an affectionate and dutiful husband. In his simple code a man loved his wife as a matter of course, and Creüsa's antipodal contrast to that wanton Helen had enchained him further. For that matter, he had been too busy fighting Greeks to be troubled by women, and his home had been his refuge and delight. If he married again it must be with some princess of Italy, the offspring of a powerful house; that of Latium, perchance, whose alliance would further his sacred purpose.

He bade the shipbuilders hasten and promised them a rich reward.

The young men stuck to him like burrs, even attending him to his chamber and remaining until they too must dress for the banquet.

Dido had wandered about the corridors and courts in vain.

She was in no amiable humor as she herself was dressed for the banquet, but she gave due thought to her toilette nevertheless. After rejecting many she chose a robe of violet tissue made with three deep flounces bordered with silver crescents, and a train of silver

gauze stamped with purple irises. Her crown was of amethysts set in electron, and she wore the pearls of Ilione.

It was a costume less magnificent than she had worn the night before, but the violet was more softly becoming to her white skin and gold hair. And she looked less a queen than an appealing young girl.

But she sighed impatiently after the women had left her. Why had Æneas avoided her throughout this interminable day? If he were as eager as she, why had he not haunted the palace halls hoping for a word with her? And now she must sit beside him in public, every eye watching!

What stupid creatures men were! Why did women think any of them worth loving? They ruled their busy husbands with profound cunning, even while flattering them with pretended submission. And yet, instead of despising them, they loved them still! If it came to a crisis they would surrender abjectly rather than forfeit the love of their men. She had many friends of her own age besides Jezebel, and she knew women through and through.

She stamped her foot. Almost she felt she hated Æneas. That he loved her she could not—would not—doubt; but she realized abruptly that her freedom from the thralls of love during these three years past had had a sweetness—an arrogant sweetness—all its own. Dido had been sufficient unto herself.

To her eyes, clear as never before, women had seemed weak foolish things. Even these girls of hers babbled eternally about men and the day when they would love and wed.

Better let him go than join the sisterhood of fools.

But when she met Æneas at the foot of the stairs, arrayed in all his glory, her heart leaped once more and fire ran through her veins.

However, she managed to greet him with a smile merely polite and asked him how he had passed his day.

"In viewing your beautiful Carthage, and in the company of many kind friends," he stammered, his eyes kindling at her beauty, so fair and innocent. "But—but—it seems long since I last saw you and I would you had attended the hunt."

"I shall hunt to-morrow," she said graciously. "And after the morning audience with my people I will take you to the roof of the palace and show you the wide sea that rose in storm only to drive you to these hospitable shores. The gods willed you should visit Carthage, Æneas, and behold what Dido, abetted by her loyal subjects, has accomplished in three short years. Perhaps they willed you should tarry with us for many months and rest; and learn much from these clever people before building your own city and engaging in the arduous duties of a King."

They were seated on the dais by this time, and Æneas stirred uneasily, even as he gazed spellbound into the unfathomable depths of those eyes, roguish for a moment. Had the gods led him to this woman and willed he should espouse her? His mother! Goddess of Love! She had given him no warning yesterday, and had bade him not flee but hasten to the court of the Queen. And who but herself as beautiful as Dido? Had the gods, moved by the eloquence of Venus, altered their purpose and willed he should build up this city of Carthage until it was mightier than old Troy or commercial Tyre? Lead forth great armies to battle until he had conquered all Italy—might not this be the true reading of their monitions on that ever memorable night in Crete?

He would set up those household and Phrygian gods before he sought his couch and implore them to take on living presence once more and make their meaning clear. For he knew not which way to turn.

Not a word could they exchange that would not be overheard by Belator and Tadmelak, or by the ladies-in-waiting sitting just in front of the dais. Jezebel's inquisitive eyes roamed from him to Tadmelak, and once he caught Anna's watching him anxiously. He liked her kind little face, and they suddenly exchanged a smile of sympathy and understanding.

The routine of the banquet was much the same as on the night before, and all, even the Trojans, were

merry. The ladies of Carthage had lost somewhat of their awe, but nothing of their admiration, and they stared at Æneas so openly that he blushed more than once. He was but a simple soldier, and never before had been stuck up on a dais to be a target for gloating women. In Troy the women had been busy and sad—all but that adulterous Helen, and she, surrounded as she was by suitors, had only scorn for the indifferent. During that long flight he had been too oft unwashed and hairy to excite any sentiment in those women who had fled with their husbands, save blind trust in his leadership.

He strove to forget himself in conversation with Dido, asking her to tell him something of life in Tyre. She gave him an impersonal description of that proud city she hoped one day to rival, and made no mention of her husband. The pale star of Sychæus, indeed, had sunk into unplumbed deeps.

"I wonder shall we have more of his adventures to-night?" grumbled Evagorus to Iopas. "I am tired out trotting after him, and would have a long rest before the morrow, when it is all to do over again."

"Surely he must have talked himself out last night. Let us hope his tongue is as weary as our legs."

"But I dislike him less than I had expected," said Pedai, an amiable youth. "He has little to say save when recalling the past, but he is pleasant and polite, and seems to have a good understanding."

Gê snorted inelegantly. "Understanding! He has ears to hear, and is neither dumb nor blind, but I doubt if that understanding could be stretched to embrace anything but war and saving his own skin. Let us suppose he came here with all his treasure sunk, including his trappings—and a broken nose. Forced to make a living among us, what could he accomplish? He'd never learn the first principles of the counting-house, and I doubt if he has brains enough to become a scribe. But he has brawn and could make a living at shipbuilding, or, out of his experience with the seas, be taken on by Abbas as a Captain of the fleet. When we take him over the factories to-morrow he will look as stupid as a sheep."

"But he'll have enough sense to keep his mouth shut," said Pedai. "He has a wisdom of his own, that young man. And it is senseless to speculate upon what might have happened if he had arrived in Carthage with a broken nose. He is the handsomest mortal that ever lived, and if we don't get him out of here quickly he'll win our Dido—perchance take her with him to Italy, for a woman in love is but a lump of wax."

Iopas flushed angrily. "Our Dido would never desert Carthage—nor be wax in any man's hands, however she might love him. She is a woman, but she is a Queen, and no Queen has ever been her equal. Nor is she a common mortal. She might be insensible to aught but love for a month or two, but after that, mark my words, she would lead him round by the nose. I'll

break your own nose if you speak disrespectfully of her again—"

"I disrespectful? I? To Dido! Curb your temper, Iopas. She may be no common mortal, but she has loved once and may love again. It is he that may be wax in *her* hands, and induced to remain here in Carthage and share her throne. The one would be as bad as the other—"

"Baal!" muttered Iopas. "He's at it again!"

Dido had commanded silence, announcing that the goddess-born would entertain them further with his adventures.

The young men disposed themselves comfortably on their couches and went to sleep.

[XIV]

Dido led the hunt in the morning, looking like a boy in her high purple buskins, her hair closely confined, and her knees bare below a short crimson tunic. A golden bow was strung from her shoulder, but the men carried the arrows, handing them out as she demanded. Her ladies were similarly attired, and Jezebel with her slight little figure and short dark hair was in her liveliest humor, well knowing she looked her best in hunting costume; some of the girls were too plump. They were escorted by Trojans, Dido having issued orders that her guests were to be given precedence over the young men of the court. All the men carried hunting spears and were followed by a pack of hounds.

Æneas rode at the right of the Queen, but Iopas pressed close to his side and talked incessantly. Tadmelak on her left was grimly determined that not a word should she exchange with Æneas that all might not overhear.

Dido suspected no plot, but she was resentful nevertheless. Iopas was a chatterbox, and would be reproved

later for boring the King merely out of love for the sound of his own voice. It was the right of Tadmelak to ride beside her, but if he had any tact he would fall behind, call off Iopas, and permit two sovereigns to converse as pleased them.

But Tadmelak displayed no tact.

They entered the mountain forest, and as a stag suddenly crossed the path, Dido snatched an arrow from Tadmelak and shot ahead, laughingly calling to Æneas to follow and win the first prize. But Iopas cunningly inserted himself between, and Dido, after one angry glance over her shoulder, sent a swift arrow into the hindquarters of the fleeing stag.

In those narrow woodland paths it was impossible for more than two to ride abreast, and the company scattered far and wide. But if Æneas succeeded in recapturing his rights, Iopas was close behind and Gê directly in front, both bent upon showing all honor to the royal guest. Tadmelak wisely left his cause in their capable hands and rode off with Jezebel.

The other young men called and hallooed, rousing stags, boars, and even panthers to action; dogs bayed, crashing through the underbrush, and the hunt became fast and furious. Small wonder that Æneas himself caught the excitement, and, hotly pursuing a fleeing boar, forgot Dido and all else.

It was all so well done that she cursed no one but Fate, shrugged angrily, and snatching arrows from

Iopas, philosophically determined to keep her mind on the abundant but elusive prey. Her aim was swift and sure, and the hunt one of her keenest pleasures. She brought down three stags and a boar—using a spear—and rode home still surrounded, but with good humor restored.

But her purpose had not altered.

"An hour hence we will meet on the roof," she said to Æneas, as he lifted her from her horse. "I go now to dress for my audience in the Temple, but the High Steward will show you the way."

"I obey your will in all things, O Queen," said Æneas gravely; "although my new friends would show me the factories—"

"The factories can wait. An hour hence."

And she ran lightly up the stair and into the palace.

The young men were not to be baffled. They knew better than to argue with Dido, but their wits were already at work.

Said Gê: "Those heroes, O Æneas, who shared your perils for seven years, to whom the sea has seemed an even bitterer enemy than the Greeks, should gladden their eyes with its beneficent calm. Achates says that its very memory makes him shudder, and I would have him cherish no such memory while he dwells among us. Invite them, I beg of you, to accompany you to the roof—and us as well. It will be all one to the Queen."

Æneas, did Dido but know it, had no wish to be

alone with her. He had set up his gods the night before, but they had remained naught but graven images and he had slept like a log. He was in a painful state of indecision, and determined not to move an inch until they counseled him. He had turned hot and cold as he held Dido for a moment in his arms while lifting her from the horse; his heart hammered against his ribs at certain tones in her voice, or veiled glances from those long black eyes that seemed beckoning him down into depths of delight. But he must be sure that his destiny was Carthage, not Latium, and he had never been less sure of anything in his life.

He responded eagerly. "I deny my friends nothing. No man ever yet had friends so devoted and faithful, and through peril and terror Achates has been ever at my side. I will explain all to the Queen. One who showers kindness so freely would never deny this small boon."

Dido had known she must be attended on the roof by her ladies, but that surface was of vast proportions, and to saunter away with her guest would not be difficult of accomplishment. What more natural than that two monarchs should have many views to exchange?

But she was quite unprepared for the cohort of men who came trooping up the narrow stair that led to the roof. Not only did Æneas and all his Captains dawn

upon her astonished vision, but six of her young Carthaginians, late of Tyre.

"What does this mean?" she asked angrily of Jezebel. "I invited no one but King Æneas."

"I overheard the King say he would that his friends might see the view from the roof—"

Æneas came forward diffidently, somewhat abashed as he met that smoldering gaze.

"I—ah—O Queen—I have taken the liberty of extending your gracious invitation to my friends—but if you are offended I'll send them away—"

Dido's flexible eyebrows arched. "Offended? My palace is my royal guest's. Did I not bid you do with it as you will? Your friends—new as well as old!—are as welcome as yourself."

She turned and waved her arm at the grand expanse of blue Mediterranean, as calm as the sky above, save where it broke in little green waves on the cliffs. Islands in the distance were vague blurs, but there were many ships on the sea: one section of the fleet was on its way to distant ports. The colored sails, stamped with the arms of Carthage, swelled in the light breeze, and the sailors sang as they rowed. In the magnificent Gulf of Tunes, but a short distance to the south, the rest of the fleet swung at anchor, and little boats were dancing gayly as fishermen plied their remunerative trade. Women were sauntering, children playing, on the beach, slaves sifting gold from the sands.

"One day you, too, will have a great fleet on the sea," she said politely to Æneas. "And then you will trade with Carthage. The Italian states are not friendly to the Phœnicians, and I shall welcome the day when I have one good friend among them."

Æneas sighed. "I fear the time is far off when I shall have a fleet on the seas. There is much to do before, and I know not what fate awaits me in Italy. But if the gods will I shall found a kingdom hard by Latium and build a fleet on the banks of the Tiber. Its first voyage shall be to Carthage, and may the two cities—the unborn, and the realized dream of Dido—be close knit in friendship."

"My own city was unborn three years ago," said Dido lightly. "And what a woman could accomplish should be as child's play to a man. But look yonder."

She pointed across the gulf to the majestic mountains of Libya, black and bare, etched sharply against the radiant sky. To the west and south spread the sandy plain, but close to the isthmus was an emerald-green lake, on whose shores pink and flame-colored flamingos stalked on their long comical legs. Other mountains cut the plain, and far to the north of the peninsula the high citadel of Utica stood out in the clear atmosphere like a floating bubble.

And below them lay the city with its painted roofs dazzling in the sun, the houses covering the narrow valley and running up the hills, but surrounding the

Bozra on all sides. In the immediate foreground were the pleasure gardens, on the other side of the Bozra the Eurychôrus with its massive buildings. The dock-yards were further south on the largest of the bays.

The great gulf served as a natural harbor, sufficing in these times of peace; it would be long before the famous artificial harbors came into being.

"A fair sight, is it not?" asked Dido. "Perhaps not so beautiful as Phœnicia under Mount Lebanon, but more varied and of vaster extent."

"Yes," said Æneas, who was not oversusceptible to scenery, "there is more to see than even from the crest of Mount Ida, on whose slopes my childhood was passed. Alas, that all I can remember seeing from the roofs and walls of Troy was those accursed Greeks and their ships!"

"And my city?" she demanded. "Was Troy more beautiful than Carthage?"

"It was older," he said, evasively. "And there were other Troys beneath it."

"I would not have other Carthages beneath mine," said Dido proudly. "Many may rise upon the foundations I have laid should it be sacked and razed in war, but the Carthage of Dido will ever be the first."

"You are more ambitious than any man," replied Æneas with a faint accent of disapproval in his voice. "How could a woman accomplish so much?" he added wonderingly. "This—and other things—"

He did not altogether commend the hoodwinking of Pygmalion and Iarbas, tales related with fine gusto by his new friends. Beautiful and bewildering beyond all women, she was perhaps too unlike them in other respects. Even Helen had lacked initiative; unless, to be sure, she had put Paris up to running off with her, as some maintained. Trojan women—Hecuba, with her multitudinous offspring; Andromache; his lost Creüsa —had been mere wives and mothers, and well content. Not one of them capable of conceiving such ideas as to run off with a fleet and build a city on an unknown shore.

No one had ever crossed this radiant imperious creature, save to his own detriment. What she wanted she took. For the first time he felt a little afraid of her.

Then he drew himself up to his six feet two of Trojan manhood. Æneas feared no one. And he could lift this bit of willful womanhood with one hand and toss her over the parapet did it please him.

If Dido guessed something of what was passing in his mind, she was in no mood to displace it by any subtle art of coquetry. She was, in truth, furious; not with him, but with all these people crowding about them.

"There are women and women," she said shortly. "Also, there are men and men. But no doubt you are impatient to see the factories, and I must go to the morning Council. Join the afternoon levee of the ladies —with your friends—if you will."

[XV]

TADMELAK had not gone to the roof. He was on his way to inspect the isthmus wall when he met Meisor in the street.

"I would have a word with you," said the old man, laying a hand on his arm. "Come with me to my house."

And, wondering what Meisor could want with him at an hour when the Elders were sitting in their Hall, he followed him up the hill to the spacious house where he lived with his daughter-in-law and grandchildren.

They sat down by the cistern in the court under the shade of a palm.

"Tadmelak," began "the father of Carthage," as Dido had christened him playfully, "I have somewhat to say to you, and you must not be angry."

Tadmelak was in anything but an amiable mood, despite the success of the morning's maneuvers, and looked at his host impatiently. "I am always ready to listen to your words of wisdom, O Meisor," he said. "But my duties press heavily."

"I shall keep you but a short time from your duties.

It is this. I know of your purpose in withholding Æneas from Dido, for I overheard Gê and Iopas jesting about it last night as they entered the banquet hall. But I conceive, and the Elders agree with me, that nothing could advantage us more than a marriage between the Queen and the Trojan—"

"What!" Tadmelak sprang to his feet. "You would have Dido marry this man she has known but a day, and who may be a liar and a common adventurer—"

"He is neither," said Meisor calmly. "And that you know as well as I. All the world knows that Æneas was one of the most fearless and brilliant of the Trojan warriors, and that he has sailed the seas for seven years. Did not Phalas see him in Eryx? Where is your memory? But to look at him is to believe in him. He is a good man and devout. He is Æneas and goddess-born—"

"Well, let him go and found his kingdom in Italy. If he is good and devout he must obey the behest of the gods."

"It may be he misinterpreted the counsel of the gods, even as the oracle on Delos. I believe—and Belator and the Trojan Ilionus with me—that his destiny is to reign in Carthage with Dido, and defend our city with his skill and his knowledge."

Tadmelak's anger was rising every moment. "The men who built Carthage know well how to defend her," he shouted. "And Dido, if not goddess-born, knows all

things by instinct. She could outwit any enemy that threatened our city."

Meisor shook his head. "A ruler needs experience as well as wit. And—I cannot but believe this Æneas is her other part, so perfectly mated in all things are they. With him beside her we should be as safe in the unknown future as we are to-day."

Tadmelak had ground his teeth, but he answered merely: "Our walls will make us that."

"The wall across the isthmus may be quickly built, but it will be a year or more before you can surround the city, and the enemy could use floats and descend upon us from the hills—"

"And what more could Æneas do than we?"

"That I cannot say, but he has knowledge that we lack. I talked with his friend Achates yesterday, and there is little of the science of warfare these men do not know. Each is a host in himself. I have had many misgivings, for I fear the wrath of Iarbas when he learns the trick Dido practiced upon him. But since yesterday my hopes have risen, and I would have these Trojans remain among us."

"And I?" cried Tadmelak. "You know well I love Dido, know that in time she would marry me. Am I to stand aside like any base-born churl who has dared raise his eyes too high, and give place to a man who was naught to her two days ago? What a poor-spirited creature you must think me!"

"You would do more for the good of Carthage, Tadmelak. And your hopes are dust. Dido loves Æneas. I have seen love in many women's eyes. Not so has she looked since she lost Sychæus. Ah! So, and far more! This man is her true mate."

Tadmelak's face was almost black with congested blood. It pounded in his ears. "He shall not have her!" he muttered. "Not a moment shall he have alone with her before he leaves."

"You forget Dido," said Meisor dryly. "Has she ever failed to get what she willed? And his mother, Venus, Goddess of Love, protects him. Between the two, what chance has a mere man?"

"He shall not have her! He shall not have her!"

"I believe this marriage was foreordained. Reconcile yourself, dear Tadmelak. Like all men, you will resign yourself in time to the inevitable. When a man realizes once for all that a woman is not for him, he turns his thoughts to another. I would that other might be my little Terah, and that you found a great house of your own here in Carthage and carry on the traditions of two illustrious families—"

But Tadmelak had rushed from the court.

[XVI]

Once more Æneas was led from point to point about the city, shown the busy hives of the factories, the quarter of the poor, and induced to air his views on wall-building. Here he was in his element and gave much valuable advice. He adjured them to extend the wall about the city, and even about the harbor, as speedily as possible. Of Africa he had barely heard until he set foot on it, but when they told him of Iarbas with his black hordes, and other barbarous Kings, he wondered at their confidence.

"You tell me the other Phœnician cities on this coast are mere factories," he said. "But Carthage is already rising to greatness in commerce, and is more famous than any colony ever planted by Sidon or Tyre. Either jealousy or greed will inspire those kings to conquer it, and your vigilance should be incessant. Moreover, I well know the ambitions of the Greeks. Many of their ships were destroyed on the homeward journey, but they are quick to build others. They have had seven years to rest, boys have grown to manhood.

They are warlike and insolent. Your harbor, above all, must be fortified."

"Not such a fool as I thought," said Iopas to Pedai. "We'll take his advice—and get rid of him. Nor has he said aught to indicate he desires to remain."

"I told you he had a wisdom of his own. He only talks when he has something to say. But he is also transparent. Did he wish to remain among us we should be aware of it by this time. Only seven days more, thank the gods!"

On the following day Æneas and his Captains were taken for a run on the sea by Abbas, and the day after for a long ride on the plain beyond the isthmus; giving the capital of Iarbas a wide berth. He visited Utica and spent the day there, induced to relate his adventures to a wondering and enthusiastic audience. The incessant activity was grateful after years of pacing the narrow deck of a ship, and the friendly admiration he encountered even more. It was a welcome interlude between a painful and often horrific past and the uncertainty of the future. Moreover, he was still in a state of acute indecision. The gods were mute, and Dido at the banquet ever more alluring. He rarely had a glimpse of her elsewhere. She hunted no more and he had not yet been free to attend the afternoon levee.

His heart felt as if turned into a ball of fire every time he looked into her eyes, and it was as if she wove

a spell about him that blotted out the day when he had been able to forget her. . . . Or was the spell of his mother's weaving? Venus, Goddess of Love! Whom had she so lavished with her own essence as Dido? Not even Helen, who might have been as ugly as old Hecuba for all he had cared.

Each night when he was alone in his chamber he was as depressed as if once more he were prowling along some unfriendly shore, not knowing what the day would bring forth, and he prostrated himself to his gods, beseeching their counsel. One night he stole forth to the Temple of Tanit. If what he had heard of other countries were true, this goddess worshiped by the Phœnicians was but Venus under another name. Istar. Ishtar. Ashteroth—or Astarte. Isis. Aphrodite. Tanit —Venus. What matter the appellation? Surely if he implored her counsel with sacrifice she would respond.

But one look at that quadrangle crowded with its orgiastic worshipers and he fled in horror. He wanted no counsel from a goddess who must be no better than a prostitute herself. He wondered that Dido, whose chastity no man could doubt, permitted the abomination in her kingdom. He asked the question heatedly of Gê on the following day.

The Phœnician stared at him in perplexity.

"It is an age-old custom," he said coldly. "Not even Dido would dare forbid it. And it has spread to Israel!

Once a princess of Tyre named Jezebel, daughter of Eth-Baal, married Ahab, King of Israel, and converted his people to the worship of Baal and Astarte. The prophets curse her memory to this day for corrupting their own religion, whatever it may have been. But who are they to condemn the Phœnicians? Astarte imposes the tribute and we obey the commands of our goddess here as in Tyre."

"But I am told that your Queen abolished the sacrifice of infants to Baal. Why should she hesitate to purify her city?"

Gê shrugged. "Children were sacrificed only when danger impended. The merciful among us deplored it. We could do nothing, nor dared lift our voices in protest. We willingly agreed with Dido that it should never pollute the fair fame of Carthage, and it never shall while we live. What may come after us no man can tell. But Dido is too wise to abolish more than one age-old custom, nor would she deny Astarte-Tanit one of her privileges. Prostitution in the Temple is with us an act of religious devotion, and women as well as men are holier thereby."

Æneas said no more. It seemed to him a queer method of purification, but it was not for a guest of the city to criticise openly its customs. He contented himself with forbidding his Captains to go near the Temple of Tanit, directing them to make their sacrifice elsewhere. Whether they obeyed him or not, he was by no

means certain, for they were acting generally like boys turned loose after a long rainy month in the house. Carthage offered them many pleasant diversions, and they seemed to be in no haste to leave.

[XVII]

It did not take long for Dido to penetrate the true meaning of her young admirer's excessive hospitality to the Trojans. But for once in her life she was helpless. She might rage and weep, but she dared not invite their ridicule and sacrifice the high respect in which they held her by forbidding their activities, and herself demanding the companionship of Æneas. Now they could harbor no suspicion of her state of mind, even though they were determined to give him no opportunity to woo her. They even surrounded him after the banquet and escorted him to his room!

Once she thought of sending for Tadmelak, stating frankly that she loved Æneas and imploring his aid. But her sense of humor still survived. And she had hurt him enough. He alone might have understood her, and experienced no decline of respect, for he was a man of large sympathies and in many ways great. But, although, like all women in love, she could be as cruel as death to other men that desired her, she shrank from inflicting so harsh an insult on this kindest and noblest of her friends.

Moreover, temper might get the better of him for the moment and drive him to cynical mirth. Never should any man make Dido feel a fool.

But why in the name of all the gods did Æneas never rebel and make a determined effort to see her alone? Every night she read love in his eyes—and on the morrow he went off cheerfully with those young villains of hers. Why did he not dismiss them peremptorily, openly demand an audience, and ask her in marriage?

True, she was Queen of Carthage and he but a wanderer, a King by courtesy only, and the proposal could be made in all propriety by herself. But she was woman as well as Queen and passionately desired to be wooed. . . . And should he put his "destiny foreordained" before his love for her she would feel a fool indeed.

She knew how seriously he took this destiny of his, egged on by oracles and gods, for she had wormed much out of the Trojan women. They had grown almost lively in this unwonted atmosphere of luxury and freedom from care, and needed no spur to talk. If they lamented at all it was that they must go forth again with their adventurous hero, and suffer the gods only knew what before he established his kingdom and gave them comfortable houses to live in. Willingly would they abide in Carthage for the rest of their lives.

Although Dido's calm pale face told them nothing, they could not doubt he had fallen in love with this

gracious and beautiful Queen, and hinted as much.

"If he hesitates," whispered one to another, making sure that Dido would overhear, "it must be that he fears her scorn, exile that he is. Or it may be that he awaits some hint from the gods, to whose will he ever bows. I know through my husband that he has set them up in his bedchamber, and no doubt he implores them each night to speak." She sighed heavily. "Perhaps they have spoken, and we must brave unspeakable terrors once more."

Dido rose abruptly and went to her room. That was it, then! He avoided her until those gods of his manifested their pleasure. Well he knew his suit would not be scorned! Behind her great fan of ostrich feathers their eyes had communed with eager or languorous passion; fleeting, but long enough to banish sleep from her couch.

Well she knew the slavishness of religious men to their gods, and this Trojan was more devout than all Phœnicians rolled into one. She herself was as devout as any, but she realized abruptly that she would defy even Astarte to get what she wanted. But Astarte, fortunately for a mind sufficiently tormented, smiled on the union.

What was Venus about that she did no more than fill him with passing desire? Why did she not appear to him again and tell him that the Goddess of Love had won in whatever contest with gods who would

found a mere city? Had she not led him to these shores and guided him to her very presence? A fine mother she must be to deny her son happiness after seven years of suffering and disappointment, let him go forth from a city that would be his for the asking; to, like as not, be treated with contumely in the Italian land, little less barbarous than the interior of Libya. . . .

Whatever the Trojan women might suspect, she knew those gods had not spoken; for had their verdict been unfavorable his eyes would no longer seek hers. He would even make some pretext to avoid the banquet.

She knelt before her old friend and lifted her hands.

"I know it is only five days since you gave me comfort in the Temple, O Astarte, but it is even as five years! I shall fall ill with weeping and vain longing, or grow wan and ugly. Venus is thy sister—or thyself —I know not which. Oh, the eternal mystery of the gods! If she is thy rival in another heaven, seek her out and propitiate her. I will make sacrifice of my richest treasure and build a temple in her honor. If thyself, relent further and appear to this man in the guise of his mother and bid him wed me. I am but a mortal and yet I am stronger than he who is half god. I would that I were Æneas and he Dido, for then there would be no room for despair in my heart. A half-god, even as a god, should control his own destiny and not wait on the orders of his kind."

She had been thinking aloud rather than praying, and rose little consoled. Indeed, she stamped her foot and turned her back on Astarte.

She clasped her hands behind her head and paced the room. What should she do? What *could* she do? Ten minutes alone with him and she would break down his defenses, make him forget his old gods existed. But not one minute could she manage, much less ten. The halls were patrolled by slaves at night or she would not have been above seeking him in his room. A Queen was more helpless than the wife of any fisherman, who could steal to the Temple of Tanit at night when her man was dead with sleep.

Why should her wits, so keen when her ambitions were threatened, be blunted by love? . . . Iopas was a good mimic and often amused the company at the banquet with his impersonations. One could hardly tell him from Pygmalion or those princes who had wooed her, a prophet of Israel or a dwarfed god; he had a chest full of wigs and pigments. Had he been on her side she would have bidden him paint and array himself until he was the living semblance of one of those gods in the Trojan's chamber, awake Æneas from his sleep, and in a deep hollow voice warn him that if he did not interpret their counsel rightly and bide in Carthage, the wrath of heaven would descend upon him.

She smiled faintly as she saw Iopas in the part. How well he would play it!

But Iopas was as little to be depended upon as Tadmelak.

She began to run about the room like a wild thing at bay. But she no longer felt rage. She was terrified and rudderless. Twice in her triumphant life misfortune had visited her: when the people of Tyre had deprived her of her crown and when her husband had been murdered. But how far away that seemed! During these three years past her course had been so uninterruptedly victorious she had come to believe that her will was as potent as divine law. And now she was more helpless than the meanest of her subjects. She, Dido, Queen of Carthage, whose fame was traveling to the uttermost confines of the earth, who, in time to come, would bring even Tyre to her knees, must run about weeping and wringing her hands because she could not have the man who loved her, and who dwelt under her very roof, his room not three minutes' walk from hers!

In her despair she thought of flinging herself from the roof, but her mental confusion was not yet too great to obliterate her sense of duty to her people. And it was still too soon to confess utter defeat. She grew calmer as she remembered that three days must elapse before the ships would be able to leave the harbor. Much could happen in three days!

Worn out at length, she flung herself on the bed and slept. And in a dream Astarte visited her and bade her be of good cheer. She was smiling when she awoke. On the morrow she would attend the hunt, and by one device or another find solitude with Æneas. If strategy failed, she would order her too assiduous adorers to take themselves off, and none would dare disobey. What cared she if they guessed her purpose, did she win Æneas? They might be astonished, scornful, furious, but later they would shrug their shoulders and wonder they had dared to believe they could outwit Dido.

[XVIII]

It was a fair morning with not a fleck on the clear blue sky. The atmosphere was sultry, but that was to be expected when the year was on the edge of summer, and the frequent thunderstorms rarely came hurtling out of the south before the late afternoon. The horses under their heavy trappings of purple and gold needed urging, and the dogs ran with tongues hanging out. Even the goddess-born mopped his brow more than once.

Dido, always indifferent to weather, was in high good humor. The young men were as watchful as ever, but she bided her time. Dreams were portents, and Astarte would befriend her to-day.

They entered the cool forest, and Æneas, who had responded to Dido in monosyllables and to Iopas not at all, drew a sigh of relief and looked almost animated.

"It is three days since we hunted," he said, "and I long to see my spear quivering in the neck of a boar. I have not hunted before since I was a boy, for we emerged from the gates of Troy only to engage in

combat with the Greeks. Slaves stole forth at night to kill and provision the city."

Dido smiled sympathetically. "The hunt is the greatest of all pastimes—nor wasted time at that. Slaves follow and bear the prey home on their shoulders, and what is not consumed in the palace is sold to the venders."

"We waste nothing," said Iopas proudly. "For that reason if no other would the Phœnicians be the richest of all peoples."

Dido turned and met Tadmelak's glowering eyes. "You have not spoken since we left Carthage," she said lightly, for she could not forbear to tease him. "Nor, so I hear, do you hunt as often as formerly."

"I have much to do," he said shortly.

"True, dear Tadmelak. No one knows better than your Queen your devotion to duty. He is the concentrated essence of all that is best and wisest and most energetic in Phœnicians," she said to Æneas. "Their worst qualities: unscrupulousness, greed, sensuality, love of dreamy ease, the gods withheld at his birth. And to him more than to any other is due the swift rise of Carthage. On his counsel I rely above that of all men. No Queen ever had such a minister!"

Her face was lit with enthusiasm as she looked up to Æneas, nor did her expression change as his eyes flashed with what might be mistaken for jealousy.

He replied stiffly. "All admit he is the wisest of your

counselors, and your fortune is great. Before I leave I would hold counsel with him, for his advice to one with a city of his own to build would be welcome. His duties have kept us apart so far."

"You hear, Tadmelak? You have neglected our guest! But you will give him one long day, promise me that."

"The Queen's word is my law," replied Tadmelak, somewhat mollified by that unexpected eulogy of his virtues. "What I have learned from that hard teacher, Necessity, is at his service. Nor have I willingly neglected him. Each day he has gone far afield with the others, and I must remain in Carthage. To-day I must give to Abbas, for the second fleet goes out this afternoon, but to-morrow is at his disposal."

They entered upon a narrow path. Tadmelak fell behind, and for a moment Iopas forgot to turn his head.

She dropped her voice. "My subjects would have me wed Tadmelak," she said with a little sigh. "And for the welfare of Carthage I have sometimes—" She broke off and looked up pathetically into the Trojan's blazing eyes.

"You—*you*—" he stammered. "No—not—"

"A boar!" shouted Iopas. "Your spear, Æneas! Your spear!"

And the hunt was on.

Dido used the arrows when a stag hove in sight, but

she kept close to Æneas. Not again would she permit any one to separate them, and her heart beat with delight as, despite his enthusiasm for the prey, his eyes sought hers, and darted glances of suspicion and dislike at Tadmelak. How she would get him alone in some sequestered glade she knew not, and her wits darted hither and thither. She was sure now that he would follow her, and willingly would she have tripped up every one of those spying brutes and left them to the mercy of the wild beasts of the forest.

But the hour was nearly over. She must either order her followers to retire as she had half-planned—an alternative little to her liking—or wait until the morrow. She was beginning to despair, well knowing what sober second thoughts might visit this wary Trojan when removed from her spell, when Fate—or Venus—came to her aid.

There was a blinding flash of lightning, a terrific thunderclap, then another and another, as if the gods in their several heavens were engaged in mortal combat. For a second of time the forest was lit to its uttermost twig, then plunged into the darkness of night.

"To the plain!" shouted Tadmelak. "To the plain! Dido! Where are you?"

His voice was drowned in the shouting of the other men and the screams of the women. Horses snorted and plunged, and dogs barked their terror. Rain fell

in torrents, trees were blasted by lightning and uprooted by the sudden violent wind. Thunder crashed incessantly. During the brief intervals horses could be heard galloping and stumbling down the mountainside.

Never yet had Dido let slip an opportunity. Nor did she doubt that this was the answer of Astarte to her prayer.

She gripped the mane of Æneas' horse with her firm little hand. "Follow me," she cried. "I know every path in this forest even as the streets of Carthage. And the shortest way out."

They plunged through the thick brush, but not in the wake of the others. Æneas had a keen sense of direction, but he never doubted that Dido knew her way about—a fact impressed upon her world many times.

"Are you not frightened?" he asked during a short lull in the infernal racket above them.

"I?" she cried exultingly. "Never! I love a mighty storm that no man can control. Once . . . ah, once, the storm gave me a wondrous moment! Shall it ever come again? Ah! I doubt not! I doubt not!"

A flash revealed the wide mouth of a cave. "The gods have led us here!" she exclaimed. "We will take shelter until the storm has passed. I confess to you now what I dared not before—I fear—I fear—I have lost the way."

Her hand still clutching the mane of his horse she rode directly into the cave. Æneas sprang to the ground

and lifted his arms. She fell into them and clung about his neck sobbing wildly.

"Your gods have answered! Your mother led us here! Tell me—tell me—you believe!"

But Æneas was beyond speech.

[XIX]

The morning Council was held in the throne-room, which opened upon one of the garden courts. The purple-crimson hangings, embroidered with suns, stars, and moons, were those that had been ordered by Mattan for his throne-room in Tyre, and the furniture was not unlike. In front of the dais were eleven chairs for the ministers; one on the right of the Queen was reserved for Tadmelak. The throne was of gold inlaid with gems, its cushions of purple satin fringed with gold, the high back emblazoned with the arms of Carthage.

The storm had passed and through the open doors drifted the sweet scent of flowers and of earth newly refreshed. The sun shone in a hot blue sky, and peace brooded over Carthage once more.

After the audience with the people, Dido had sent for Tadmelak, but he was not to be found. She shrank from the interview, but it was his right to be told in private the momentous announcement she was about to make to the counselors. She drew a deep sigh of relief when the messenger returned alone, and with high head and rapt eyes walked alone to the throne-room.

Tadmelak came in after the others with a muttered apology. Sergestus had been thrown from his horse and broken his leg. He had had him carried to the house of Phalas, which happened to be nearest the foot of the mountain, and helped the doctor to set the bones.

"Take him the sympathy of the Queen," said Dido absently. "And tell him that sacrifice shall be made in the Temple of Esmoun, the god implored to restore him quickly to health."

Tadmelak bowed, and moved his chair where he could get a fuller view of her face, for he was filled with dark suspicion. One long look sufficed, and he lowered his eyes and gripped the arms of his chair.

The business of the morning was quickly over; there was little in smoothly running Carthage to worry the ministers. It was decided to send an ambassador to Tyre to negotiate for trade with the far east; to purchase if possible a thousand pounds of the purple dye of the murex and five hundred of helix violet; and then, with Pygmalion's permission, proceed to Sidon and persuade glass-blowers and needlewomen to emigrate to Carthage, promising rich reward.

"And whom shall we send?" asked Dido. "It will require much tact to deal with Pygmalion."

Her eyes slanted toward Tadmelak. He drew in his breath sharply, rose, and made a deep obeisance.

"If it is your wish, O Queen, I go willingly." And his eyes stung hers with their angry scorn.

A slight color mounted her white face and she drew herself up with what only he could interpret as an air of defiance. But she welcomed his anger. Had his eyes been sad and reproachful, her task would have been harder.

"No one so well fitted as my Lord Tadmelak," she said graciously. "He has dealt with all conditions of men, both at home and abroad, for three years now, and will know well how to deal with Pygmalion. And —you will take with you information to convince him that Carthage is more to be feared and placated than ever, and he had best refuse her nothing."

She rose slowly and towered above her ministers, tall, majestic, remote.

"Your Queen is about to wed," she said in her clear, bell-like tones. "Æneas will reign with me here in Carthage, accepting this as his true destiny, and foreordained by the gods. Astarte also has counseled me, and the omens are favorable. I have been released from my vow, that those who reign after me may be eternally under the protection of the gods whose blood is theirs. And that I, Dido, daughter of Mattan, who founded this great city, shall have ever at my side a King who will inspire all jealous states with awe, or know how to circumvent them."

She lowered her eyes to the men who had risen and stood staring at her, but carefully avoided the smoldering gaze of Tadmelak.

"Speak, Meisor," she said. "And then all of you. My decision is irrevocable, but I would hear what you have to say."

Meisor spoke eagerly. "It has been my wish! Tadmelak will bear me witness. Happy will be the day when Dido weds Æneas!"

"And mine, O Queen," said Belator. "You will not take it ill that we have discussed this great matter in private, and hoped you would bid the Trojan Prince to remain and reign with you over us."

Badbaal responded with equal enthusiasm, as, indeed, did most of the others, although a few were too stunned to speak. Aslartus, cousin of Tadmelak, alone was resentful, for he had hoped this great honor would descend on his house. But his silence and that of Tadmelak passed unnoticed in the rising babel of voices.

Dido, her face lit by an inner radiance none had ever seen on that mobile countenance before, listened with a faint smile.

"Your Queen thanks you for your good wishes," she said with calm dignity. "Never have my friends failed me, nor ever shall Dido cease to ask their counsel. Your eminence will be in no wise altered, and Æneas respects your judgment even as I."

"I may have a word with you?" asked Tadmelak abruptly. "I go to-day, and I must receive further instructions."

Dido's nerves shook, but she answered coldly: "You

know as much as I, Lord Tadmelak, of the affairs of Carthage—" Then she braced herself. Had Dido ever feared any man? "But remain if you will." She turned to the others. "The audience is over. I wed the Trojan King to-day, and bid you all to the Temple of Astarte at the hour of the afternoon levee."

Eleven prostrated themselves and withdrew.

Dido descended from the dais. She met unfalteringly the cold fury in Tadmelak's eyes. "You have cause for anger—disappointment," she said quietly. "Well I know! I would have loved you if I could, but the gods willed otherwise—"

"I have no quarrel with the gods," interrupted Tadmelak rudely. "If I know Dido, she does as pleases her despite gods and men. Ever have you acted from your own center. You have won this man in the very teeth of his own gods, for I know from Achates they have withheld their counsel—"

"They spoke in the storm to-day and he heard them! He knows now that his true destiny is to love Dido and reign in Carthage, making her ever greater and more invincible—"

"Carthage, root of the House of Teucer!" Tadmelak gave a sardonic laugh. "Is Carthage in Italy or Africa?" He was less religious than most Phœnicians, and disposed to regard their fear of the gods as gross superstition. And never had he had less use for gods than to-day.

He continued with rising fury. "Carthage, that three years ago was an unbroken wilderness! And Italy as old as the world! He is drunk with love now—you have seen to that!—but wait until he comes to his senses. May the gods you both worship—"

"Don't curse me, Tadmelak! Don't curse me!" All majesty fell from Dido as she ran forward with hands outstretched, her eyes wide with pleading and alarm. "I have merited your anger, but— Oh—I would have you forgive me—and—not—not forget those long years of our friendship."

"Friendship!" But his eyes relented. "I shall not curse you, Dido," he said heavily. "One may defy the gods but not Fate. Marry your Æneas and be happy. All I ask now is permission to sail at once—to-day. I shall not remain to see you wed this man."

"As you will," she said sadly. "But I would that the best of my friends were there to give me his blessing."

"One blessing among so many will hardly be missed. With your permission, O Queen, I shall retire, as I have a thousand things to attend to."

Dido stood for a moment looking after him; beset with doubt, perplexity, regret. The oldest, the best, the most tried of her friends, and, save as an able minister, she had lost him forever. Then she turned and ran from the room. A moment later she had forgotten him.

[XX]

The news flew through the city on humming-birds' wings. Women ran from house to house, and every court was crowded. They would have met on the more spacious roofs had the sun been less fervid. The market-place and the quadrangle of Baal-Hammon were a seething mass of men. The Halls for Elders, Shophetim, and Merchants were deserted, and priests and priestesses surged out of the Temples. Farmers and factory hands, masons, weavers, dyers, wall-builders, sailors, came running in; those that were crowded out of the Eurychôrus and the Temple courtyard met to shout at one another in the pleasure-gardens.

Never had there been such excitement in Carthage.

Dido to marry!

And this stranger Æneas, not Tadmelak!

The ladies of Carthage hardly knew whether to rejoice or to give way to pangs of jealousy, for all had fallen in love with the goddess-born, the one supremely handsome man they had ever seen. But, after all, what hope had they cherished? The great prizes ever fell to

Dido, more beloved of the gods than Æneas himself. They began to talk of what they would wear to the wedding.

The men on the whole were acquiescent. Some there were who resented the idea of a foreign consort, but Æneas had won all hearts with his dazzling good looks, his candor, his simple friendliness combined with kingly presence and the halo of his birth. And a man so experienced in war would be a godsend to Carthage. Moreover, Dido loved him and they would deny her nothing. Once more they felt as if lightly brushed by the gossamer wings of romance.

All but the young men of the court. No words could describe their mortification and fury. All their carefully laid plans gone for naught! During that accursed storm those two had found solitude together and come to an understanding.

They followed Tadmelak to his house, too angry even to condole with him, but hoping that with his ever ready resource he would conceive some way of preventing the marriage.

"Surely you will not permit it!" cried Iopas, stamping about the room. "Let us kill the man if we can do no better. How can you stand there giving orders to pack when you should be challenging him to mortal combat? How can you run away instead of standing up for your rights?"

"Stop raving," said Tadmelak impatiently. "It is

for Dido to say whom she will marry, not I nor you. A pretty fool I should look challenging him to mortal combat! And to what end? Even if I killed him—little likely—should I gain aught from Dido but hatred? I should leave Carthage not for three months but forever. She is madly in love with this man, and as well try to move the rock she lives on as turn her from her purpose. I have seen it coming since he arrived among us. What am I but a man like yourselves? A man and nothing more! What hope for any man in all Phœnicia against a Trojan hero a head taller than any of us, 'goddess-born,' and as beautiful as the Greek Apollo?" He laughed bitterly. "It is only a fool who doesn't know when he is beaten. Thank the gods for this embassy!"

"We weren't half clever enough!" exclaimed Gê. "Iopas is fair and quite pretty. He should have got himself up as a god and appeared to Æneas warning him off. The goddess-born is superstitious enough to believe anything."

"You should have thought of that before. It is too late now. Dido is not one to let any grass grow under her feet. She weds him to-day—not even to-morrow! Resign yourselves and make the best of it."

Evagorus beat a table with his fist. "I'll not go to the wedding! I should feel like a fool. No doubt she saw through us all the time, and is even now laughing at us."

"Feel a fool if you like but don't act like one," said

Tadmelak shortly. "Do you want to lose your position at court? be forbidden the hunt and the banquet? Are we children to sulk because we have lost? We played a good game but the other side won. There is nothing to do but smile and hold up our heads, else were we not men—men who braved the dangers of flight from Tyre and founded a great city. I am not resigned, but I accept."

"It is all very well for you to talk," grumbled Pedai. "You get out of it, and find much to distract you and engage all your faculties, but we must stay here and grin as if we liked it."

"I am grateful to go, the gods know. And would that I might never return!"

"But you will!" The others echoed Gê's cry. "You'll come back to us, Tadmelak? What would Carthage be without you? That Trojan may know war and how to build walls, but he'll never learn the needs of this city as you know them. I doubt if he ever learns anything. Dido will be the real ruler as ever—and *you,* as ever, must be her chief counselor."

"Oh, I shall return. Carthage is my destiny, whatever befalls. I love her little less than Dido. And if I can stand it you can."

"I wish I didn't like him so well," said Pedai gloomily. "He's really a good fellow—"

"He's a jackass," from Gê. "And Dido will find it out in time."

Tadmelak sighed heavily. "Let us hope that if one tires it may be she. But no woman was ever more constant. . . . I do not mean," he added in response to angry cries, "that any man could tire of Dido, but I am thinking of his gods. When the first consuming fires are sated he will imagine he hears them whether he does or not."

"Not he. He's got too good a thing here in Carthage. A city ready built and famous! We've got him on our backs for the rest of our lives."

Tadmelak looked thoughtful; the shadow lay less heavy on his brow. "What was it Ilionus said of him? 'Foremost of men in righteousness, incomparable in goodness.' If the time comes when his mind wanders to the past—to prophetesses, oracles and gods—and doubts assail him, he will do what he thinks right. If duty calls high enough above passion he will obey. He may not be as clever as we are, but no more honest man ever lived. There, perhaps, is the source of my acceptance. In time I believe he will hear his gods speak, and sail away for the land that gave birth to those Teucers who founded Troy. And Dido will be free!"

"Haha! Haha!" Pedai turned a double somersault. "And we never thought of that! But you were always the wisest among us. We'll make sacrifice to our gods and bid them put life into his."

"But we'll have to endure him for Baal knows how

long!" exclaimed Evagorus. "No man loved by Dido would come to his senses overquickly."

"Gods!" cried Iopas. "And we'll have to listen to him talk, talk, talk, for months on end. Perhaps years. Dido and all the rest of the women never tire of listening to him, and last night they made him begin all over again! I haven't had a decent night's sleep since he came."

"Well, at least you won't have to run round with him all day. My chests are packed. I go now to the dock. The fleet has orders to sail within the hour."

[XXI]

MANY resented the fact that the Queen chose to be married in the Temple of Tanit, for all could not be accommodated, and it stood in a grove. Anna would have had the wedding in the banquet-hall, the largest room in the palace, but Dido brushed her arguments aside. Only in the Temple of her goddess would her marriage be blest. And the people could see her as she walked from and to the palace. The word went forth and the streets and housetops were crowded long before she appeared.

In her bedroom confusion reigned. All the garments she possessed littered chairs, tables, chests, divans, and bed. The tire-women wrung their hands and her ladies darted in and out. Little Iulus, who had the run of the bedchamber, was under everybody's feet.

"What shall I wear? What shall I wear?" cried Dido distractedly. Exaltation fled for the hour. "I must look my best. Would there were time to make a new gown! I have worn everything here."

"I love you in silver—" began Anna, but was cut short.

"I wore silver for my first wedding." Inadvertently she darted a glance at the closed door of the room dedicated to Sychæus. "And when a woman marries for the second time she would look silly indeed if aping the virgin."

"Then wear gold. Nothing makes you look more royal."

"I wear gold so often. I would have something more original for my wedding day."

"Well, there is no time. What of the robe of Babylonian blue embroidered with constellations?"

"It would not go well with my train, which must be of the purple royal. What of violet? It becomes me greatly."

"I think it should be gold," said Anna with decision. "Æneas—I have spoken with Achates—will wear his gold armor. And it were well did you send him our father's train of Tyrian purple. You must not look less royal than he—"

"I have it! I have it!" Dido ran over to a table and held out with both hands a robe the upper part of which was made of tiny gold scales and designed to fit the body as closely as a cuirass. The lower half was of deep bands of violet sloping downward, but spreading outward about the feet. The long tight sleeves were also of golden scales, but crossed at the top with stripes of purple and violet that extended from shoulder to shoulder at the base of the throat, and

sewn with amethysts and diamonds. The girdle, separating the two parts of the dress, resting lightly on the hips and falling below the knees, was of pale pink tissue stiff with rubies. Over the navel was an immense topaz sun with diamond rays.

All the tire-women clapped their hands and hastened to lift the garment over her head before she would have time to change her mind again. Even Anna nodded approvingly.

It was easier to readjust a discarded skin on a snake than to encase a woman of Phœnicia in one of those gowns decreed by highest fashion. Dido held her breath and wriggled at the proper times as two of the women slipped it over her head and drew it inch by inch into place, others pulling it over the hips, jerking and smoothing. Still another lifted her hair away from the scales of the bodice. Dido gave a final shake and walked over to the long mirror amid a chorus of admiration. No fairer form had ever been more adequately revealed: the small low bust, the delicately swelling hips, the slender rounded arms, the long column of the throat, the thin ankles and narrow arched feet.

Iulus stood on his head and kicked his feet in the air to express his approval. None happier in all Carthage than he, for he should continue to live in this palace of unlimited sweets and gardens, with never a glimpse of the sea unless he went to the roof. Jezebel sank to the floor as if overcome. In truth she was almost as

happy as Dido. No men so practical as the Phœnicians, and Tadmelak, hopeless at last, would turn his mind to founding a family of his own.

Anna nodded her head vigorously. "You have never looked better. But how you will keep up with Æneas' long legs in that tight skirt I know not. He must be warned. And your jewels must be diamonds and pearls."

"I shall wear the double crown of Ilione."

Two of the women were deftly braiding Dido's long hair, still holding it far from the scales, knowing they would be well slapped did those tiny points jerk at the roots. Then they covered it with a veil of golden gauze powdered with diamonds, and adjusted the crown of the ill-fated Ilione. Long ropes of diamonds and pearls were hung about her neck, golden sandals strapped to her feet. Anna clasped the train to her shoulders and handed her the scepter with the blazing diamond tip.

A bell was rung to signal to the slave in the antechamber that the royal toilette was finished. Immediately the halls of the palace resounded to the clangor of gongs. But a moment later trumpet blasts from the citadel wall echoed through the city.

[XXII]

When Æneas and Dido appeared at the head of the movable stair on the Bozra the cheer that went up made the very houses shake and the palm trees rustle as if in the throes of a gentle earthquake. Dido's lips curved over dazzling teeth in a brief smile, and her eyes were sparkling, but Æneas was god-like in his serenity. The die was cast. The gods had spoken. He was the happiest of men.

Dido had sent a curt order to Iopas and he had thought it the better part of valor to obey. He stood at the foot of the stair with his band of musicians, and, as the trumpets ceased their clamor, flutes, lyres, cymbals and kettledrums burst into music sweet and triumphant.

Æneas and Dido, side by side, descended the sixty steps of the stair. The train of Æneas was borne by Iulus and another Trojan youngster, that of Dido by Terah and a daughter of Belator. The ladies of the court, dressed in their gorgeous best, followed two and two, the Trojan men and women behind them.

The procession, preceded by the musicians, passed slowly up one of the three long streets that led directly from the Bozra, then turned to the right and mounted the hill of Tanit. The cheering had stopped abruptly at a peremptory blast from the walls; inspired by Iopas, who had no mind his efforts should be wasted. The people looked on in silence, pushing and striving for a closer view of the Queen. Every detail of her glittering dress they took in, and whispered their comments. Some would have had all gold, some silver, others Tyrian purple; but all agreed that not even Venus, mother of the bridegroom, could be as beautiful.

The quadrangle and House were already well filled by the favored guests invited by Meisor, whom Dido had appointed master of ceremonies. The bronze doors of the House of Tanit were almost as wide as the wall, and when the bride and bridegroom entered the sanctuary, those without crowded closely, many climbing on the shoulders of the more fortunate unrebuked.

It was a great day in Carthage.

The ceremony was simple. Æneas and Dido sacrificed doves at the altar. Every voice was lifted in a deep sustained chant. The solemn invocation rolled through the doors and was taken up in the quadrangle, and then by all the waiting throngs without. An immense volume of sound that traveled over the sea and up to the mountains.

Æneas and Dido prostrated themselves before the

statue of Tanit, and when they rose and stood hand in hand before the goddess it seemed to his bemused vision that the brazen image had disappeared and Venus herself stood there smiling benignantly on her son.

Then, as he turned and looked into the eyes of Dido he fancied that a faint mist surrounded them, isolating them from all those eager staring eyes. For a long moment they gazed and rose on the wings of ecstasy. Never since the world began had two beings been so consumed with the fires of love.

They went forth amid renewed cheering, down the hill and to the Temple of Baal-Hammon, for that almighty and dubious god must be propitiated lest he uncork the vials of his wrath upon those who set Tanit, Face-of-Baal, higher than he.

Belator sacrificed a doe for Dido and a bull for Æneas, and the chanting was monotonous and incessant. Iulus and his little friend fell asleep and were hastily carried out lest the god be offended.

Then they climbed the Bozra, and skirting the palace, prostrated and knelt and stood while the priests of the Temple of Esmoun offered sacrifice and implored long life and all health for the King and Queen of Carthage.

When the ceremonies were over night had fallen and it was time for the banquet.

It was difficult to outdo in magnificence those that

had gone before, but the High Steward was a man of resource. The floor was sprinkled with gold dust from the beach, and the walls were festooned with ropes of jewels and chains of Ophir gold—the treasure of Sychæus! Long strands of roses swung from the high lamps, and the wall behind the throne was banked with purple and gold irises. The cooks had outdone themselves and invented new cakes and sauces. The gold plate had never shone so brightly, and there was a Ziggurat on each table. The light was dazzling and the air sweet with incense.

After the nymphs had been dismissed, Dido, who had changed her dress to one of floating gauze, descended from the throne, and weaving in and out of a veil, or holding it above her head, revealing her bare arms, further bemused Æneas with a dance both voluptuous and chaste, a combination of which she alone knew the secret. Seven years were blotted out, ten years before them. All the world was bounded by Carthage, and none in it pulsed with life save Dido and Æneas. All those cheering, clapping men and women might already have been shades in the dark realm below.

Iopas and the other young men, still furious and sulky as they were, followed with a magnificent concert, and all their songs were of love and hope. Their good humor was almost restored when they learned they were to be spared the adventures of Æneas. He

was in no mood for talking. The day had seemed interminable to him.

But it was over at last, and Æneas hung up his sword and shield in the bedchamber of Dido.

PART FOUR

[I]

SOME four weeks after the wedding Æneas and Achates held a long conference together. Both were men of action, and it was unthinkable that the King elected by the Trojan wanderers should settle down to a quiet life in Carthage. There was little for him to do save direct the building of the walls, for the government ran on oiled wheels, and he had no desire to supplant Tadmelak, that master of infinite detail.

He sat mute beside Dido at the morning Council, which sometimes lasted less than ten minutes, and he had no advice to offer Elders and Shophetim. He knew nothing of commerce, and although he recognized its importance and admired the enterprise of the Phœnicians, it interested him little. He had been bred on war.

Dido understood the needs of her people far better than he, and he would have been a mere figurehead at the audience in the Temple. He enjoyed the hunt and the banquet, but the hours were long between. Save during the hour of siesta and the brief interval

following the afternoon levee, he rarely saw Dido alone. Whether too wise or too conscientious, she omitted none of her duties.

He and Achates sat in his old room where they would be free from interruption. Both wore the briefest of schenti, reveling in their privacy, for the atmosphere was as scorching as if the sun had plumped himself down bodily into the city.

Achates had elevated his feet to the window-sill, but his humorous weather-beaten face, scarred with the wounds of battle, was turned to his friend.

"And you the happiest and most fortunate of men!" he said banteringly. "And after seven years of horrors. What more could a man ask?"

"I know! I know! But I have yet to fulfill my destiny. And my destiny is not to be King in a small commercial city. Venus, my august mother, directed me here, and the gods, in their beneficence, willed I should marry Dido and reign in her city, but that is only the beginning. The House of Teucer is still unavenged. Iulus should inherit a kingdom of his own, for what else meant that omen of fearsome light that streamed about his head, when my father refused to leave the house and bade me return to the fray? Anchises accepted that omen and we fled that Iulus should fulfill his high destiny. Dido's son would inherit the kingdom of Carthage, not Iulus. The people have accepted me, but they know well the real power remains in her

hands, nor would I seek to take it from her. It is her city and hers only, and I reign but by courtesy. Well they know their Dido, and well they know their power. . . ."

He continued after a short pause, unbroken by Achates. "Last night while Dido slept I rose quietly and came to this room and lay before the gods." He waved his hand to a row of battered images that stood on a shelf. "They did not speak, but in a long hour of meditation I conceived it was their will I should conquer the Italian land in whole or in part, from here. That I was directed to marry the Queen of this realm in order that my great adventure might be the more swiftly and surely accomplished."

"Yes—yes—" said Achates doubtfully. "You—nor any of us, now that we are restored to health—can rust here in idleness. But before attempting the conquest of Italy, I would suggest sending an embassy to Latinus, King of Latium, and asking his aid in founding a kingdom near his own. The rest of us could go there and hold it with the King's troops until Iulus is old enough to reign. Besides, to attempt a conquest of Italy would be impossible for many years to come. Where would you find your army? We Trojans are but a handful, and it is unlikely the men of Carthage—business men all of them and hating war—would drop their pursuits to fight the doubtful wars of a foreign prince. We should have to wait until you had extended

the building of Carthage over the entire peninsula, made her so powerful that her name filled the world with terror, until her population had trebled, quadrupled, and all the younger men bred to war and conquest. The work of a lifetime!"

Æneas moved restlessly. "Anchises my father, who knew the ways of the gods far better than I, reminded me as he expired that my destiny foreordained was to replant the old line in Italy. Will it please the gods if I spend a lifetime but planning for it—or leave it to others? Surely these young men who have been so friendly to me, have the adventurous spirit of youth, and would travel far and wide to recruit my army."

Achates smiled cynically as he dipped a cup into a jar of water sweetened with honey. "Don't rely on those young men! They like you less than you think. I have seen dark looks, and I have a suspicion they did all they could to prevent your marriage with the Queen. They might do a good deal to get you out of Carthage even yet, but they'll not go with you! No, nor do anything to make you more powerful."

Æneas turned his large eyes, limpid as mountain lakes under a dark blue sky, yet uncommonly steady, on Achates in surprise. "Not like me? Not like me? They have vowed me their eternal friendship."

"Phœnicians would vow anything to gain their ends. Commerce breeds more sharpness than honor. Those young men would have had Dido marry Tadmelak if

any one, and then only for the sake of the throne, for they are all in love with her themselves. Expect no help from them. Either wait and see what the future brings forth, or send an embassy as I have suggested. After all, that is little less than your first intention—to seek advice and help of Latinus, not to conquer all Italy. What put such an idea into your head?"

"The gods, as I told you. I thought it was the true reading of their message in Crete. And why, otherwise, was I driven by the waves to Carthage, not Utica? Or why should a storm have risen at all when we started in the fairest of weather? It seems to me the true reading . . . but . . . perhaps your interpretation is the true one. In many things you are wiser than I. But it leaves me with little to do! I have been a man of action all my life. Must I live softly in Carthage for all my years remaining? I cannot believe the gods have no better use for my health and strength."

"You may find enough to do repulsing barbarous hordes—but no, I do not believe that Æneas, goddess-born, has yet accomplished his high destiny. Let us consider the embassy to Latium as the first step, and see what comes after. If the gods will that you found your own kingdom in Italy be sure they will direct you. Why not go on this embassy yourself—"

"I'll not leave Dido for a day! If in time I may assemble a powerful army to descend upon the Italian shore, I shall take her with me. Carthage would be

safe in the hands of Tadmelak. But now you could do as well as I. Take Ilionus with you. Latinus is an old man, and no doubt more willing to listen to the wisdom of years. But it seems a tame compromise! Nor can I believe the kind friends I have made here hate me. Tadmelak, perhaps, but surely not the others. Not now, at all events, that the deed is accomplished. . . . They think their city the greatest in the world save Tyre; it will be my part to convince them that only war and conquest can make a city truly great."

They talked until the hour of the afternoon levee was over, and then Æneas arrayed himself properly in his long trailing mantle and sought Dido in their bedroom, where alone they found seclusion.

[II]

ÆNEAS and Dido, growing more in love daily, forgot Carthage and all else when alone. She therefore opened her eyes wide when Æneas, after a few moments of vigorous love-making, began to talk of sending Achates to Latium. She became the Queen at once, and withdrew from him, her eyes suddenly wary.

"You have not given up that idea then?" she asked coldly.

"I must think of Iulus. He never can reign here in Carthage. He must have his own kingdom, and restore the lost glory of the House of Teucer. Achates would be regent until he is old enough to govern, and as Achates is a great warrior no doubt he will extend the realm the King of Latium may help him to conquer."

He knew better than to speak of his hope of taking an army to Italy did the embassy fail, for, although he would never have admitted it, he was a little afraid of her, and wise enough to keep his plans to himself until the hour was ripe. He also had an uneasy suspicion

that she held his gods in little esteem, and would give even less heed to their decrees.

"Yes, Iulus should be a king," she said warmly. "And I would be the last to withhold him from his destiny." She darted a swift veiled glance from under her lashes. "But—should Latinus consent, you would send him from you?"

"No. He shall remain here until he is four or five years older. Then he must be sent to his people to win their allegiance, as well as to be instructed in the duties of a king. Achates will be a wise regent and teacher."

Dido drew a smothered sigh of relief. Five years hence. Much might happen in that time. "I shall dread the parting even as you," she said noncommittally, "for you know how I adore Iulus. Shall you send your fleet with Achates and Ilionus?"

"No, for it might be misinterpreted as an act of war. They will stop at Eryx and crave another ambassador of Acestes, who is on friendly terms with Latium."

"Yes," said the Queen emphatically. "I like neither war nor the appearance of war, and it would be well known the fleet embarked from Carthage. Never shall Carthage be engaged in war while Dido lives."

Æneas suppressed a sigh. Trouble ahead if Achates failed. But he had got himself out of too many tight places not to have learned something of diplomacy.

"The greater Carthage becomes, my beautiful Dido,

the greater her danger. Life is long before us, and we may have to defend her again and again."

"Defend her—perhaps. But never shall she court war, never while Dido lives! Who should hate war more than yourself, who fought for ten long years only to be beaten at last?"

"How long ago it seems!" murmured the warrior dreamily. And then he answered with spirit. "That war was none of our making, and we were defeated only by a trick. In a fair fight no Greek could have conquered Troy."

Queen turned abruptly into woman. "Never! Never! My warrior lord! And Troy is immortal in history. Many a time in my Tyrian halls have I listened to wandering minstrels singing of its mighty heroes and feats. Æneas and Hector! And when I listen to you—to those wondrous tales of combat, the heroism and stubborn resistance of your Captains, the headlong crash of chariots one upon another, the hurtling spears . . . I, who all my life have known only practical men until now . . . I feel as if I had been winged to another sphere. I no longer hate war when I listen breathless to those glorious deeds—but I would have none of it myself," she added hastily. "War leads only to ruin. And never shall you risk your life again."

She flung herself into his arms and wound her own tightly around his neck. "Never, never, never shall you ride forth to war again, even if Carthage is attacked!

Your knowledge will direct the army, but you shall remain safe with me here in Carthage—"

"And be called a coward and feel one!" interrupted Æneas passionately. "A King if he be young enough rides forth at the head of his troops. Is Æneas the man to hide behind the walls of a citadel while his men fall in battle? Know, Dido, that Æneas has never felt fear in his life, nor turned from danger."

Dido turned another mental somersault. "Well I know that Æneas is even more god than hero," she murmured soothingly. "And a Queen ever buckles on the armor of her King. It was only the wildly loving heart of a woman that raved. But we have little to fear, for our only danger lies in Libya, and there will be naught when the wall is built. And I well know you would never seek war with any peaceful state, for all your manly craving for combat must have been sated long since. Long years of love and peace and happiness the gods have granted you now."

Her eyes and lips melted, and so did Æneas. Let the future take care of itself.

Achates and Ilionus sailed on the following day. Æneas, to occupy his time and strength, himself, during the cooler hours of the morning, engaged in the building of the wall, putting new life into the workmen. They were few in number, for Iarbas had withdrawn his blacks after his visit to the city, looking with scant

favor upon walls that might one day defy his rule. Even now, did Carthage but know it, he was rumbling in his palace, for he was little slower of wit than the Phœnicians. That woman had outmaneuvered him again. No Trojan hero would take a woman to wife who had one leg in the tomb. She had made a fool of him for her own purposes—of him, Iarbas, god-born, mightiest monarch in all Africa! Turned herself into a ghost rather than marry the King of Libya! Scorning his condescension when she should have fallen at his feet overcome at the mere prospect!

An embassy from Utica had visited him and innocently related the details of the marriage day, for one of their number had been in Carthage at the time. Nor omitting to describe the dazzling—and healthy—appearance of the Queen. He gnashed his teeth when they described the fair beauty of Æneas, goddess-born. Who was this Trojan wanderer to be favored when Iarbas was scorned? What was a goddess-born to a god-born, and a reigning sovereign at that?

But he concealed his fury from the Uticans—ascribing the faces he made to a pain in his middle—and bided his time.

[III]

The swift apprehension that had stabbed Dido's jealous heart passed and was forgotten. She went through the round of her duties automatically, her thoughts rarely diverted from the god-like being whose every tone and glance filled her with rapture, and with whom she shared a happiness so unmortal in its ecstasy there were moments when she would have welcomed death lest it never come again.

But Æneas was the perfect lover even as he had been the perfect warrior. Like Dido, he did nothing by halves.

He even forgot to miss Achates in the strenuous labor of the day, and lived only for his hours of solitude with his bride, that bewildering creature of every fascination to whom his goddess-mother had led him blessing the union.

But when Achates returned to report failure in his mission his restlessness returned, although he concealed it from Dido. Latinus had been deeply offended that Æneas had sent ambassadors instead of coming him-

self to pay homage to the venerable King of Latium. Wandering Trojans had told him of the goddess-born's "destiny foreordained," and he had been prepared not only to receive him but to give him his daughter Lavinia in marriage. And now he had married an upstart Queen and sent his friends to beg a kingdom for his son! He took no interest whatever in the little Iulus, despite the omen of his blazing head. If the House of Teucer were to be restored at its foundation the duty had been imposed upon the grandson of Jove, who had uttered the decree in High Heaven. Iulus might come after but not before.

"And would he have me desert Dido?" cried Æneas indignantly. "Desert her and marry his Lavinia? Had he ever seen Dido he would laugh at himself!"

"I forbore to tell him that," said Achates, "for I thought that in time he might relent."

"Why should he relent? What would it advantage him? I was a fool to ask such a favor of any man and believe he would grant it. But his ancestors had once mingled their blood with mine, and I thought it would appeal to his pride of race. What is to be done now?"

"Have you sounded those young men? Would that I had been mistaken! Is there any hope of getting an army in train?"

"There is none," said Æneas gloomily. "I mingle with them after my morning's work is done—and indeed they often stand watching me when not about

their duties. But the more I talk with them the more I am convinced their thoughts never can be turned to war and conquest. No men were ever more content with piling up riches and enjoying their own fair city. You were right and I wrong. And as for the Queen—" He shrugged and sighed.

"It may be true," he added in a moment, "that my days of war are over, and that peace and happiness are my portion henceforth. Venus my mother has showered her riches upon me, and the gods know I am not ungrateful. But I am young and love deeds—nor content with the mere memory of them; and I am haunted with the neglect of my mission. Is there naught for me to do save to urge the building of Carthage into a great and powerful state? Beautiful and prosperous she may be, but still too small for greatness. . . . But . . . but . . ."

"The gods will speak in due course and point the way," said Achates emphatically. "Æneas at thirty-four has not come to the end of his adventures. The son of Venus, and grandson of Jove and Dione, was born to a life-time of great deeds, not to dawdle in a Punic city."

"These Phœnicians claim that Venus—or Astarte—Tanit—as they call her, rose from the foam of the sea, born in ocean's depths, not in the heaven of the gods. Had I not trained myself to hold my wrath save in battle, I would have quarreled with them fiercely. But

what they think matters little. Would she were the daughter of Juno, who might then hate her less. Once more that cruel goddess may prevail, and rive Dido from me in her jealous fury. All else were as naught to that."

Achates turned away his head. Juno's wrath would be welcome indeed did it get Æneas out of Carthage. He was unsusceptible to the charms of women himself, and resented this infatuation that had rendered Æneas almost indifferent to his supreme destiny. It was all very well to have a wife if a man wanted one, but he should be careful to select a woman who had no will of her own. This Dido had a will no man could shake and was an enchantress to boot. But he knew that no argument would avail with Æneas in his present thralldom. He determined to seek counsel with Iopas. Two heads were better than one.

Only his love for his friend gave him patience, for he was heartily tired of Carthage and its everlasting talk of commerce. Italy was a fairer land than Libya, and the prospect of action infinite. And Æneas must fulfill the destiny imposed upon him by the gods whatever befell. Lavinia too was fair and a man soon forgets.

Dido sympathized sweetly with Æneas over the failure of the embassy, and gave no hint of her complacency. She wanted no ties with other states save

commercial, certainly none that would ever beckon to Æneas did Iulus dwell in Italy.

Æneas was no adept at concealing his own feelings, but for once he was wary, and treated his disappointment lightly. It was the decree of the gods, and he must accept it with due humility.

"If it is the fate of Iulus to rule in Italy, no King of Latium can prevent it," he said. "He is young and can afford to wait."

Tadmelak returned and when it was learned that his mission had been completely successful the city gave him an ovation and Dido held a banquet in his honor. He sat at her left, but beside her on the dais. The hall rang with huzzas, and songs composed to celebrate his victory. If he had conquered Tyre in war they could hardly have made more of him. Æneas, now an old story, was ignored and Tadmelak the hero of the hour.

If his face was thinner it was bronzed and still handsome. All the women gazed upon him with favor and Jezebel's black eyes flashed a continuous admiration that would have flattered any man. But she drew her breath sharply when she noted that his gaze wandered sometimes to Terah. One of the girls had married at last, and despite Jezebel's protests, Terah had replaced her. Dido had replied coldly that it was the wish of Meisor and she could deny him nothing. Well Jezebel

knew the ultimate wish of Meisor! He had thrust that little fool into the palace where she would be always running into Tadmelak, under his eyes at the banquet.

But Terah was less of a fool than the jealous older woman imagined. Love had sharpened her faculties, and she had a married sister. She did not seek Tadmelak's eyes in the bold fashion of Jezebel, but dropped her own with a blush and a faint quivering smile whenever their glances crossed. And she was infinitely lovely.

But Tadmelak, although he kept up a brave front, was still consumed with love of Dido. When he mingled with the company after the banquet—Æneas had ceased to hold forth long since—he talked impersonally with both Jezebel and Terah until the King and Queen had retired. Even when they waylaid him in the halls during his frequent visits to the palace they won little from him but politeness, although he was not insensible to their beauty nor the flattery of their preference. But they faded from his mind immediately. Unlike Æneas he was fortunate in having many things of moment to occupy his time and they left him with no long hours for unrest.

[IV]

THE long dreamy summer passed and the tang of autumn was in the air. The wall had been neglected, even Æneas succumbing to the fierce heat, and seeking the cool of the palace; or the house occupied by the young bachelors, who ever made him welcome. He saw little of Tadmelak, whose energies no heat could abate.

Dido suspended her afternoon levees, and the ladies of Carthage made no remonstrance, for they preferred the shelter of their houses to climbing those sixty steps and promenading in a garden where even the monkeys lay panting. Those hours Dido spent in her room with Æneas, and she carried a little loom there and wove him a mantle of Tyrian purple shot with threads of gold. He lay on a divan and watched her, fascinated by the swift play of her long firm fingers. On the first cool day he wore it abroad with pride, bound about his temples with a golden thong.

He had ceased to think or to feel unrest during those long voluptuous days when he was seldom far from the enchantment of Dido, and he avoided Achates,

whose disapproval he well knew. Youth and summer were made for love and he was sunk deep in content. His gods were forgotten.

Houses had been built for the Trojans and the palace knew them no more save at the banquet. The sailors were happy in their reed huts and the fleet swung at anchor in the blue tideless gulf, its timbers cracking in the heat.

Æneas rarely sought his old friends, Antheus, Cloanthus, Sergestus, Gyas, Aletes, Serestus, Mnesitheus, for he dreaded their reproachful eyes. Aged Ilionus alone cast no eye to the future, dwelling complacently in the house of Meisor. He had had his fill of adventure and his old bones demanded rest.

The younger men, to the uneasiness of their wives, as desirous as Ilionus to remain in Carthage for the rest of their days, grew more and more restless, although they stood too much in awe of the goddess-born to utter their discontent. Both mind and body had been exhausted when the storm flung them upon the sands of Carthage, but they were revitalized long since and longed for action and adventure. The thought of becoming merchants offended their Trojan blood, and although they loved their wives well enough, they were amazed at the infatuation of Æneas: the grandson of Jove, and molded for deeds of glory. Achates fired them with his tales of Italy, where there were many cities to conquer. If only because they had been

so shamefully defeated in their own land, they longed to win by conquest a kingdom of their own and bring other states into subjection. They believed Dido to be an enchantress, a Circe, who had woven an invisible but unyielding web about their hero and rendered him as helpless as a trussed sheep prepared for the sacrifice.

But when the sharp cooling breezes swept over the Mediterranean and lifted the pall of heat from the city, the ordinary routine of life was resumed and energy pricked the veins of Æneas. He spent his days at the wall and hastened its building, for visitors from Utica brought the news that Iarbas was grown unfriendly and jealous. Even sailors were pressed into service, and the wall across the isthmus was quickly finished and began to mount the hill; Æneas as ever directing and often helping to lift the stones into place with his kingly hands.

It was noon and the men had gone home to their midday meal. Æneas was alone in a glade examining a weak spot in the masonry when he heard a light quick step behind him. He turned, thinking it was Iopas perchance come to bear him off for luncheon—a meal Dido took with her ladies; but what he beheld made his knees shake, and even his hands fell inert as if weighted.

A glorious being stood there in the deep shade of the trees. Winged golden sandals were on his feet,

golden hair made a halo about his god-like head. The light mantle that enwrapped him was of cerulean blue, and he carried the wand of office.

Mercury, the messenger of Jove! Many times had he appeared on the field of Troy, but never had Æneas had the rare good fortune to see him.

Until now!

Deprived of speech, his tongue cleaving to the dry roof of his mouth, and almost fainting at the honor done him, Æneas sank slowly to the ground and prostrated himself, then rose to his feet regarding the god humbly. The rest of the world was blotted out. He stood, an empty shell, to receive the message from Olympus.

The god spoke. His voice was high and sweet, but stern of accent.

"My way has been long, Æneas, goddess-born, for I come from the court of Jove in High Heaven. Through clouds have I passed, Zephyrs speeding me, over many lands, many seas, until I saw the snows of Atlas beneath me. Thence I hurled headlong, skimming the air like a bird, resting neither here nor there, lest the vengeance of Jove follow me—but forced to lurk in the depths of the wood until time flew by and Æneas was alone."

His voice grew sterner and more threatening.

"Jove is wroth with thee, Æneas, and with Venus, thy mother. Was it for this she twice shielded thee from

the Greeks, thus kept her promise to the Omnipotent thou shouldst replant the seed of Teucer in Italy and leave thy son the proud heritage of many kingdoms? Oh, shame that Jove should look down from his house and see thee toiling for Carthage, a puny city, bound in the thrall of a woman whose passing beauty would wreak thy destruction, turn the blood of a hero into the voluptuous wine of love, thy son forgotten! From Olympus come I to bear the decree of Almighty Jove. Flee this land for thy son's sake if not for thine own. Shame be on thy lust. Recall thy deeds of glory on the plains of Troy, where thou wert second only to Hector in man's esteem. Who holds thee in esteem now? Thou that art half-god, no common mortal, break these unworthy bonds, rise from the soft lap of Libya and achieve thy high destiny. Else wilt thou be cast out forever from the favor of the gods."

The voice ceased. There was a blinding flash of light. The god vanished. All the world was filled with a terrible silence.

Æneas stood petrified, but his heart thundered and his hair stood upright. The gods had spoken! And through Jove himself!

Dido rose before him in all her alluring beauty, but he thrust the vision aside, his face hot with shame. All his being revolted at those long months of thralldom to a woman when he should have wrested from Italy a kingdom for his son and fulfilled a destiny granted to no "common mortal." How his Trojans—more loyal

than he—must despise him! But far less than he despised himself.

Life returned to his limbs, and he ran down into the city, sending messengers right and left to summon Achates and all his Captains to meet him at the docks. Before they arrived he had already called his sailors from their huts and ordered them to beach and overhaul the ships.

When his Captains joined him his eyes were both somber and exalted.

"We sail for Italy as soon as the ships are made ready," he announced. "We have tarried too long, and our destiny is the Teucerian wellspring, not slothful ease in Carthage. High Heaven has spoken!"

"Thank the gods! Thank the gods!" The welkin rang. "Would we could go to-day. But the ships have been neglected and there is much to do."

"It must be done quickly—and secretly if possible. Ah! What shall I say to the Queen?"

"Tell her nothing!" exclaimed Achates. "Nothing of the truth, for it may be many days yet and her wit and her spell are greatly to be feared. Tell her that I go on another expedition to Italy, taking Iulus and all our Trojans with me. Tell her that we go not in war but in peace, in the sure hope that Latinus will be moved by the young beauty of Iulus. And that we escort him in proper state. It is easy to deceive a woman."

Æneas sighed heavily. Dido was not as other women. Long after, he went on lagging feet to the palace.

[V]

Few things could be kept secret in Carthage. At the afternoon levee all the ladies were chattering of the frantic industry down at the docks, where the Trojan ships were already beached, sailors calking the seams. Others were in the forest hacking down stout limbs to fashion into oars. Orders had even gone forth for provisions.

Dido's heart turned over, but she preserved an indifferent mien.

"My lord sends them forth on a mission of his own," she said. "You will know all in due course."

But when the women were dismissed she ran through the palace to her bedchamber. A terrible presentiment had assailed her and she feared she might never see him again.

But he was there awaiting her as usual, although when she burst into the room his eyes wavered and his face lost its color.

In her relief she felt nothing but anger.

"What is this I hear?" she cried. "Your fleet pre-

pares for sea and the Queen of Carthage kept in ignorance? No fleet leaves this harbor without my permission."

"I send Achates on another mission to Latium," mumbled Æneas. "We suddenly decided . . . you were engaged . . . why should I trouble you? He will take Iulus—and—and all our people—that Latinus may be duly impressed."

But Dido was not to be deceived. No woman ever is when a man has made up his mind to leave her.

She drew herself up to her queenly height, and her words, cold, precise, and charged with contempt, hit him like so many blows in the face.

"And Æneas goes with them! I see it in your averted eyes, your sickly pallor, I hear it in the tones of your faltering voice. Do you forget that I am Dido, well-versed in every crooked turn of the simple minds of men? Have you lived with me for months and yet dare to pit your wit against mine? And is it for this I gave you shelter in Carthage, when I could have burned your ships and put every man among you to the sword? Is it for this I have loved you and made you King in my realm? And you would have stolen away without a word of farewell! No memories moved you! Your troth, our love forgotten! You, the falsest of men and the most cowardly!"

"Oh, Dido! Dido!" Æneas felt as if wild horses were tearing him apart. The blood stung his cheeks, he was

humiliated to the dust, but he could not give anger for anger. "No man ever loved a woman as I love you, but I must go, for the gods have spoken. Mercury, bright-winged messenger from heaven, visited me but four hours since in a glade of the forest, come to deliver a message from Jove himself. Jove! Who accuses me of weakness and lust when I should long since have obeyed the decree of the gods—"

"Mercury!" Dido's voice rang out in scorn. "Iopas dressed up! He could impersonate a god as easily as men and women. And they all wish you out of Carthage."

Æneas shook his head somberly. "It was no mortal," he said. "You know not whereof you speak, for to you the gods have never appeared. No mortal can clothe himself in radiance and inspire both terror and adoration. And never could an Iopas delude Æneas goddess-born." He drew himself up proudly and met her dilated eyes with that unnaturally steady gaze she had so often noted. Fear and humiliation had passed. The gods had gathered him, their wayward brother, into the fold. He could feel their firm sustaining arms about him.

Dido reeled and sank helpless on the divan behind her. In spite of her angry words she had not really believed . . . but the incredible had happened. . . . The room whirled about her.

"But it cannot be, it cannot be!" she muttered. "You love me. . . . You would desert your wife, Dido? . . .

She who loves you as no woman ever loved before. . . ." She began to cry helplessly.

Æneas made a swift involuntary movement toward her, but drew back.

"It is the decree of Jove Omnipotent," he said, his voice as steady as his eyes. "I should have gone long before. I have been chosen On High for this mission and it is not for me to question the will of the gods."

"But you will take me with you?" she cried wildly. "If I would desert my city to follow you, surely you, my husband, will not refuse to take me!"

Æneas shook his head sadly. "The gods like you not. They are wroth with you for holding me here in your toils. But I blame myself, not you, for I misread the portent of the storm."

Strength returned to her limbs and she sprang to her feet.

"I hate the gods!" she cried furiously. "Why should they make sport of mortal happiness? And *yours!* How can you respect them when they tell you one thing to-day and another to-morrow? They led you to Carthage. They permitted you to remain here. If they love you more than other mortals and would have you found this Teucrian city in Italy, why did they not control the waves when you set forth for the Tiber? Unless they willed you should love me, why are you here? They *did* speak in the storm. Your mother led you here. They are wavering gods with no true purpose.

They make sport of you and you are not man enough to bid them defiance."

"It was love that spoke in the storm, not the gods. My ears were sealed. It was then I defied them. My mother descended to earth and bore me for great deeds, or never would she have been permitted by Almighty Jove to desecrate her immortal body. Twice I would have shared the fate of Hector on the blood-stained fields of Troy, had she not made swift flight downward and waved death aside. As long as I live I must act the part of a hero, not dawdle in love. There is a world to conquer for myself and my son, for without us the House of Teucer would perish from the earth. I have been a hero in the past, and a hero must I be until I die—"

"A hero! Is it, then, the part of a hero to desert his wife? Are you not man as well as hero? Must a hero do nothing but fight? Are heroes patterned on the wild beasts of the forest? And you would leave me to the mercy of Iarbas? Is that the part of a hero?"

"Your gods will protect you from Iarbas. It was their will you raise this fair city, and no barbarous hordes will prevail. I feel little of a hero at this moment, Dido, but a man must ever place duty above love. Never shall I cease to love you, and I wish— Oh! I would the gods had willed otherwise!"

She would have flung herself upon him, but he looked so immobile, despite that brief outburst, so remote,

that she dared not. The sun, slanting through a high window, shed a halo about his bright head. He looked more god than man and she drew back.

"I make one last appeal," she faltered. "Let my fleet go with yours and seize your kingdom, while you remain in Carthage. My sailors, recruited from all over the seas, will fight for gold and I will pay them out of my treasure. Iulus can replant the seed of Teucer, and your Captains, men of long experience, can lead your armies to battle. If they fail and naught but your presence will turn rout into victory, I will send you forth and accept my unhappy fate. That I promise you on the word of a Queen. But that much I have the right to demand. And if you go it is because you will, not because you must."

Æneas folded his arms. He wished he had played the true part of a coward and never seen her again. But the fear of Jove was in him, his deep sense of kinship with his brethren. His eyes were steadfast, almost cold.

"The gods have decreed that I go, and go I must," he said solemnly.

"Even if you knew that your desertion would mean my death? For how can I live without you?" She flung her arms above her head, her body rocking to and fro. "O Astarte! Astarte! Bid him relent! I am young to die, but I cannot live without him!"

Her staring eyes rolled toward the statue of the god-

dess, but she found no hope in that expressionless countenance.

And once more anger mounted. She, Dido, to be spurned by a wandering Trojan, beaten ignominiously by the Greeks; skulking in the forests until he could cast himself upon the seas where his gods had shown him scant favor! To be rescued by her good will and pampered in her city, winning her love when she should have given it to a better man! She, Dido, daughter of Mattan, who had founded a great city and had her way in all things! To whom all men bowed and whom so many men had loved! She, Queen of Carthage, one of the rulers of the earth! For the moment she hated him, and her contempt was as fierce as her hate.

"Go, then!" she shrieked, her eyes flashing fire. "Go, and may the furies of the deep go with you! May your ships be torn in twain on the rocks, and may you die calling in vain on Dido to rescue you once more! May the name of Teucer perish from the earth and the name and deeds of Æneas be forgotten! And think not that even in death thou wilt escape me, for even in the nether world my vengeance shall pursue thee! In life and in death the face of Dido, hating, loathing, shall be ever before thee, and thou wilt run hither and thither, seeking a way of escape and whining to thy false gods to give thee succor. Go! Begone! And the curse of Dido go with thee!"

Æneas, terror-stricken, fled from the room, forgetting his sword and shield. When the tire-maidens, waiting in the antechamber, ran in, they found their Queen unconscious on the floor.

[VI]

Dido revived under their ministrations, but she lay on the couch looking more dead than alive, staring at the ceiling. Her women knelt about her, kissing her hands, her robe, anathematizing Æneas under their breath. What a husband to run away and leave his wife on the floor! But what else could be expected of a barbarian? Would that she had married the Lord Tadmelak.

"Go, and send the Lady Anna to me," she murmured faintly.

But Anna had seen Æneas running through the courts as if pursued by the Furies, his face distraught, little of the god in his bearing, and entered at the moment.

"What is it?" she exclaimed. "What has happened? Dido! You are ill!"

And she ran forward and cast herself on her knees beside the couch, while the women hastily retired.

Dido spoke in a low, monotonous voice. "Æneas goes to the Italian land never to return. He told me that Mercury, swift-winged messenger of the gods,

came to him in the wood and uttered the will of Jove that he leave Carthage and Dido, and replant the seed of Teucer in the birthplace of his race. It was Iopas, I know, but I could not convince him. I, who love and revere the gods, scoffed at that vision, for well I know the gods do not reveal themselves to mortal eyes, else would have Astarte visited me long since. He was betrayed by a trick, but his eyes were blinded by zealotry."

"But he is goddess-born!" gasped Anna, who had listened to this story agape. "And he has seen the gods before, and Venus, his mother. . . . Nor would Iopas dare."

"Iopas would dare anything, for he hates Æneas and would have prevented the marriage. It may or may not be that Æneas has seen his gods, and Venus, his mother —if it so be that she is his mother. Who can say that Anchises was not deceived by some lovely nymph and that Æneas is not the victim of illusions? Steeped in that belief as he is, and treated always with reverence as the grandson of Jove, he has exalted himself in his thoughts above all mortal men. He saw no heavenly messenger to-day. He believes because he wishes to believe, because he is sated with love and Carthage, and longs for adventure and power. And no man ever lived who walks in such fear of the gods. Nor any man more stubborn. And when a stubborn man is weak for ime and awakens, he is relentless to himself and the

woman who has been the cause of that weakness. I have lost him, lost him forever."

"But it cannot be! It cannot be! Dido! He loved you as no man ever loved a woman. Not even Tadmelak loved you as Æneas. Take heart, my sister. It will be many days before the fleet can be made ready, neglected as it has been. Meanwhile you will turn him from his purpose. He loves you and will not be able to resist you. The image of that messenger will fade and he will see only you."

Dido's voice never varied from its terrible monotone. "He will not trust himself to return to the palace. There is no such thing as love in the hearts of men. Iopas loves me, and in striking at Æneas he has given Dido her death blow. He is a selfish fool. And Æneas is a greater fool than he. Dido, who outwitted Pygmalion and Iarbas and built a great city, the envy of the world, gave her love to the greatest fool of them all."

Anna was distracted. Youth and a tremendous adventure had cured Dido of her first great sorrow, but this was a mortal blow and there was nothing left of novelty to divert her. If she had run about filling the palace with her lamentations she would have been far less terrifying, for violent grief exhausts itself. But Dido might have been a marble effigy on her own coffin, her voice rising faintly from the tomb.

She burst into tears and wrung her hands. "I hate

him and so should you!" And then she spoke eagerly. "If you despise, you can no longer love him. His falseness has overwhelmed you, but you are proud and strong, and will rise and cast out his memory. Tell me —tell me that you no longer love this false Trojan—whom may the gods curse!"

"I know not," muttered Dido. "I feel nothing. I am frozen . . . empty of all feeling. My very body feels empty, as if heart and vitals were dead. Only my mind goes on, goes on. Why is it not dead also? And I am so cold."

Anna, deeply alarmed, covered her with a rug and chafed her hands. "You had a heavy fall and fainted," she said with what consolation she could muster. "Let me call the women to bring a warm bath sweet with soothing perfumes. . . . And you will recover, dear Elissa, as you did before. Grief does not kill. Call pride to your aid. Carthage must not know that Dido is a deserted wife. Rise and dress yourself for the banquet. Remember that you are a Queen, and avert the scorn and the pity of your people."

Dido sat up suddenly and pushed the disordered hair from her face. "Tell them to bring the laver," she said, "and send word to the High Steward to remove the throne of Æneas from the dais."

[VII]

The company was assembled in the banquet-hall long before it was time for the Queen to make her appearance. The walls rang with the high voices of men and women. Surmises, prophecies, furious denunciations, fierce disputes, wild guesses, rent the air.

More than one had seen Æneas leaping down the Bozra stair looking like a madman. All knew of the excitement down at the docks. The women of Troy were not present. It was known they were packing—and weeping. Meisor, bombarded with questions, replied briefly that Ilionus would go with the fleet, but had no explanation to offer.

The young bachelors alone were calm. It looked as if they were to be rid of this foreigner at last and they were well content.

The doors behind the throne were opened and silence fell, a breathless staring silence, for these men and women were avid with curiosity.

Dido entered, followed by Tadmelak, who always met her at the foot of the grand central staircase.

She was superbly gowned in cloth of gold, a train of Tyrian purple embroidered with golden suns, and a high diamond crown on her head. Never had she looked taller, more royally composed, more majestic. There was a faint sigh of disappointment. They loved her, but they fain would have seen that fair cold countenance ravaged with grief or distorted with rage.

They bowed low—it was not the custom to prostrate at the banquet save to visiting princes of their own color—and then lifted themselves as quickly as decency would permit, still staring. That vanished throne. Would Dido explain?

The Queen came forward slowly, but did not seat herself at once. She stood with one hand resting lightly on her throne.

"I have somewhat to announce to you," she said in her clear bell-like tones. "My Lord Æneas has incurred my displeasure and leaves as soon as may be for the Italian land. The palace will see him no more, nor his name be mentioned among us. But it is my will and my decree that all courtesy be shown him for what time he still lingers in Carthage. Any one of you who violates this decree will never enter my presence again. Now seat yourselves and make merry."

She settled herself on the throne, and turning to Tadmelak asked him of the progress of the wall and various other matters pertaining to the state, even forcing herself to eat. She still felt as if moving and speaking

in a dream, or attending, perhaps, the ghost of some banquet long past, a ghost herself. But the technique of royalty stood her in good stead. If she was capable of feeling thankful for anything it was that the woman in her was dead and only the Queen survived.

The company made a gallant effort, but it was far from a hilarious evening. The women could not refrain from whispering, and abrupt silences fell. Iopas and his musicians sang their gayest songs, but even their voices rang hollow, for they were vaguely uneasy. No one took up the chorus. Jezebel strove in vain to meet Tadmelak's eye, but his attention was all for the Queen. His face told her nothing. The olive color was paler than its wont, for it was commonly stained with a healthy red, but his features were no less composed than Dido's. Terah, who was too young to know aught of human passions, felt a little sad that he took no notice of her, but satisfied a healthy appetite. Anna looked white and drawn and stared before her, eating nothing.

All drew a sigh of relief when the banquet was over and the Queen rose and dismissed them.

Tadmelak crossed the court beside her and escorted her to the foot of the staircase. But they were followed by the ladies-in-waiting, and she had fallen silent, walking like an automaton, her eyes concealed under their heavy drooping lids.

She had begun to mount the stairs when she paused

suddenly and motioned to her ladies to go on ahead.

"A word with you, Tadmelak," she said, and he ran to her eagerly.

"You will give me your promise that you will not speak with Æneas before he goes." Her voice was stern and peremptory, and when an angry fire leaped into his eyes her own grew hard. "I will have no scandal in my kingdom. Two men fighting over the Queen! Defy me and there will be no place for you in Carthage. You will have looked your last upon Dido."

"I would avenge your wrongs," he muttered. "That man is a brute and a poltroon. He should not go his way unscathed. He pretends to have seen a god in the forest—a messenger from Jove! Baal Almighty!" His voice rose as anger carried him away. "He fell asleep and dreamed and interpreted the dream as best pleased him. He knew as much of the gods' will when he came here as he does now. How dared he win your love, only to fling it aside when the gods—or his own desires—spurred him anew! Any fool could have told him he was out of place in Carthage among men of brains and peace. The Trojans may be great in war, but they are dull of wit, else would they never have been made fools of by that wooden horse; and such men can make no place for themselves among Phœnicians. I do not blame him for that, but I blame him for remaining at all, and far more is he to be execrated and despised for running away now. If he were half a man he would defy

his gods and accept the consequences of his own act. If he persuaded himself that his gods willed his marriage with Dido he could as easily persuade himself of their will that he pass his life by her side here in Carthage. I know not whether he is fool, madman, or trickster, but whatever he may be he should not leave Carthage unrebuked. He should be driven out by an indignant people—"

"And your Queen made to look as great a fool as you think he is." Dido's voice was cold and even. "All that you say may be true enough, but it is my will that he go in peace. And it is my hope that all believe he goes at my wish. You will do as I command or leave Carthage with him."

Tadmelak stared for a moment at that frozen countenance looking down upon him from the step above. Then in a flash he understood her; and even better than she had understood herself during those dreary hours since Æneas had left her. He bowed low.

"Your wish is my law, as ever," he said.

He stood watching her as she ascended the stairs with high head and unfaltering steps. He was not deceived. That unnatural calm would pass. What would happen then? He had looked forward to the inevitable day when Æneas would go forth to his "destiny foreordained," and his own hopes revive. But he felt no hope at the moment; nor was it of himself he was thinking as he hastened from the palace.

[VIII]

Anna gave Dido a sleeping draught that night, and its heavy potency lingered throughout the day and enabled her to follow the routine of her duties, coming to the aid of queenly pride. She held the morning audience in the Temple, met her ministers in Council, lunched with her ladies, and attended the afternoon levee in the garden, where she listened to the gossip of Carthage and made fitting response. A dominating trait of the Semites was curiosity, and the minds of these women were racked. They had heard the story of Mercury in the woods, but almost Dido convinced them that she had wearied of the goddess-born—so different from clever and animated Phœnicians—and cast him out.

And she felt as calm as she looked.

But as she was walking slowly through the corridors with Anna it was as if she suddenly heard a loud explosion in her head. Her body shook violently. She staggered and her hands flew up to clutch her hair. She turned blank eyes on Anna.

"I cannot," she gasped. "I cannot . . . Send word there will be no banquet to-night . . . that I am ill—anything . . . I must be alone. . . . I thought I was strong, but I cannot go on. Oh, Anna! Anna! I am dying!"

Anna threw her arm about the swaying body and rushed her to her room. As they approached the antechamber where the tire-maidens were waiting, she whispered hurriedly. "Limp! Lean heavily on me!"

"The Queen has twisted her ankle and is suffering great pain," she said to the kneeling women. "I will attend to the hurt myself. Your services will be needed no further to-day. Take the word to the High Steward and tell him to send messengers forth that no banquets will be held until the Queen is able to stand again without pain."

She closed the door behind them and waited hopefully for Dido to run about the room screaming and beating the walls with her head.

But Dido stood rigid, her eyes wild and terrified, muttering to herself. Then her knees gave way and she sank to the floor, her body swaying to and fro, hard sobs racking it.

Anna stood over her, wise enough to hold her peace and waiting for the storm to pass.

Dido lifted her head, her dry eyes staring at nothing. "I cannot stand it," she mumbled. "I must see him again . . . once more. . . . Bring him to me, Anna.

Go, seek him on the shore. Tell him that I am dying. Oh, I know that my grief would touch him! That I could win him anew! He is kind—he was always kind—he would not desert me if he knew. . . . Tell him I repent my wild words—my curse. Don't stand there staring at me," she cried in sudden fury. "Go, or I'll cast myself from that window!"

Anna ran to her own room, covered herself with a dark mantle and veil, and hastened from the palace. The streets were almost deserted; it was the hour when all were resting before the evening meal and there was no one to recognize her. Laughter, the high merry voices of children, the strains of cymbals and flutes, floated from the tall houses, the wind sighed through the trees on the hills, incense floated from the temples, the blue Mediterranean was deepening to violet, a crimson reflection from the setting sun flickered across the sky. Anna sighed heavily. How like to the Tyre of her youth, and how unlike! Would they had remained in the palace of their fathers and this accursed Carthage the wilderness they had found it.

She made her way rapidly to the docks. Here there was neither quiet nor leisure, for the sailors worked in relays. Hammers were ringing, pitch boiling; Captains shouted orders, men ran at their bidding. Some were patching the sails, others shaping oars newly cut in the forest. No one noticed the small dark figure, who

might have been a sailor's wife come to bid her man to his supper.

Dark was falling and torches began to flame. She stood hesitating, not caring to accost any of these men and ask to be guided to Æneas, lest one of the Captains overhear and divine her purpose. She knew that he was living on his ship, but all ships looked alike to her, and men swarmed on every one of them. Could he have gone up into the town—to the house of one of his friends? Where should she seek him? She dared not return to Dido with no word from Æneas.

She was wringing her hands in despair when she caught sight of him. He was walking apart on the shore beyond the line of beached ships. She hastened forward and stood before him, and even in that pale light she saw that his face was haggard.

"It is Anna, Æneas," she said. "You must speak with me for a moment."

He started and turned as if to flee, then planted his feet.

"What is it, Anna?" he asked kindly. "You—you should not be out alone at this hour."

Anna threw back her veil, and he averted his eyes from her agonized face. She had no gift of eloquence and her words tumbled out.

"Æneas, you have treated Dido cruelly, and why have you done it? You are not cruel by nature, for I have known you well during these long months that

you have dwelt among us. Dido has done you no wrong, Æneas. Your gods have done you wrong again and again, but never Dido. And she loves you as never before, and your cruelty is killing her. If you must go, if nothing will hold you, not even her love—at least, oh, at least, grant her last request! She is ill and I fear for her life. She would see you once more. Come with me now!"

Æneas was deeply moved, but unrelenting. "Anna," he said hoarsely, "Dido loves no more than I. But the hand of Fate is heavy upon me and I must give up all hope of mortal happiness. I dare not see her again, for love would betray me, and I should be held accursed by the gods—and by myself that I had failed in my duty. We are both puppets in their hands and she must bow to their will even as I."

"But, Æneas!" Anna sank to her knees and raised her clasped hands. "You will not desert Dido without one word of farewell! As you so well have known her power to love, so must you know how terribly she is suffering. Her grief for Sychæus was but the wild unrestrained grief of a child. She is a woman now and her deep voiceless grief terrifies me. Would you condemn Dido to death? Is Dido, then, as other women who can be thrown aside like a light woman of the Temple? No woman lives as great as Dido, and you alone are her mate. Take her with you and all her fleet.

The gods were angered only that you lingered in Carthage—"

But, like Mercury's, the feet of Æneas were winged as he fled down the beach to his Captains.

[IX]

ANNA found Dido pacing rapidly up and down the room. She had smoothed her hair and bathed her face. A delicate perfume hung about her.

"He will come? He is here?" she cried, running forward. And then the door closed and she saw Anna's face.

She shrank back, her hands thrust out as if warding off a blow.

"No! No!" she cried wildly. "It cannot be!"

"He will not come, Dido," said Anna sadly. "He loves his gods better than he loves you, and he fears them even more. Be resigned, my sister, and console yourself with the thought that he is unworthy of you. He said himself that he was but a poor puppet in the hands of Fate. Shall Dido mourn for such a one? Forget him and remember only Carthage and your people—"

"Oh, don't talk to a woman who loves and who has learned that all else is as nothing, of a city and its people! I would give them all for an hour with Æneas!

What matter if I despise him? You know nothing of love. There is nothing in life but youth and passion. All else is a dream. How could you have been expected to move him? *You!* I will go to him myself." And she made a rush for the door.

But Anna stood before it and desperation gave her wisdom.

"If you try to pass me I will claw your cheeks and destroy your beauty," she said passionately. "You—to go running through the street like any common woman! You—to be jeered at by those men down at the docks, who hate you! And Æneas would run from you, coward that he is, and take refuge on his ship surrounded by his Captains. You would gain nothing and lose all you have left, for to-morrow Carthage would ring with laughter and seethe with disgust. Remember that you are Dido, daughter of Mattan, and forbear to bring disgrace on your house."

Dido had dropped her arms helplessly. "Yes," she said, "I cannot go. It would avail nothing, for the gods have him in thrall. It is over—over—and Dido is alone!"

And then she looked about her wonderingly.

"This cannot be I. This terrible calamity has been visited upon some other woman, and I stand apart as in a dream. . . . It is as if I had dwelt in High Heaven and fallen headlong to earth. . . . Oh, that I could feel rage as when I cursed him! But I feel as sad for

him as for the wife he has deserted. What will Italy avail him when he thinks of our hours in this room together? . . . And yet— Oh, I know not what I say! Is he not a man, and is not action and adventure before him? A man and a Trojan? Æneas, goddess-born! For him forgetfulness—for Dido— Oh, why does not grief kill?"

"But you have much to live for, my sister." Anna took a cold unresisting hand and led her to a divan. "The years bring peace, and Dido is a Queen with the world at her feet. Live for your people until time has dimmed this sorrow. Or—who knows?—when his high mission is accomplished he may come back to you. Surely the gods would be appeased if he won his kingdom and set his son on the throne of Teucer. Venus, his mother, would plead that his great deeds be rewarded."

But Dido was not listening to these doubtful words of comfort. She sat with her arms hanging, her eyes vacant.

"Death! Death!" she murmured. "If I could only die!"

"But you are young and strong and cannot." Anna spoke with energy. "And if you took your life you would be as great a coward as Æneas. Have you forgotten that for your sake all these men of Tyre left their stately homes and the greater part of their treasure, their aged parents, to endure hardships in the

wilderness that you might accomplish your ambition and reign in your own kingdom? A Queen is not as other women. She may love, but her people come first. Promise me," she went on with stern emphasis, "that you will not kill yourself. If you do I will pray to Astarte to curse you in death, and make you suffer untold agonies in the nether world."

Dido shuddered. "Astarte would grant your prayer," she said bitterly, "for she loves me no longer. While you were gone I prayed to her and believed—"

There was a low discreet tap at the door. Anna flew to open it, believing that Æneas had relented, and Dido sprang to her feet. But one of the high officials of the palace stood there.

"The Lord Tadmelak would speak to the Queen at once," he said. "The matter is of great moment."

"I'll not see him!" exclaimed Dido. "Bid him come in the morning."

The man left, but returned immediately. "The Lord Tadmelak says that no time may be lost. An embassy from Iarbas is here."

Dido sank back on her cushions.

"Bid him come here, then," she said. "My ankle pains and I cannot go to the great hall." The door closed and she laughed harshly. "The diversion is not unwelcome. Perhaps I am fortunate in being a Queen!"

Tadmelak entered for the first time that room he had

furnished. But he saw nothing but the ravaged face of Dido. His own was drawn with anxiety.

"An embassy has come from Iarbas, O Queen," he said. "He demands your hand in marriage, and avows his purpose, do you decline the honor, of arriving with his army the day after the departure of the Trojan fleet. If—if—you reject him he will lay Carthage in ashes and put all your subjects to the sword."

Dido had risen slowly to her feet and was staring at him. "But I am the wife of another! Whether deserted or not! Of what can he be thinking?"

"That has no meaning for Iarbas—"

"But the wall? What else was it built for? He cannot pass the wall, nor can he starve us out, for the sea is ours."

"He will bring floats and enter the city from the hills. Our mistake was that we did not build the wall first and the city last. Every man in Carthage would die in your defense, and die they would, for we should be outnumbered by tens of thousands—"

Dido turned upon him furiously. "And would you have me save the city by giving myself to this monster? Is it for that you have brought me this insolent message?"

"Never! I bring you the message because I must. See these men and give them fair words, thus gaining time to outwit him. If needs be we will desert the city and take refuge on the Sicilian Isle. Never while Tad-

melak lives shall that black monster work his foul will—"

"Desert my city! Carthage that I built to stand through the ages! We must think of some way to circumvent that barbarian. Never shall my Carthage be destroyed!" She paused and motioned to him not to speak, while she bent her head, her brows drawn, her hands clasping and unclasping. Then she looked up, a strange light in her eyes. "Tell me," she said eagerly, "is it only Dido he desires, or this fair city on the edge of his empire?"

"He cares nothing for Carthage, O Queen. No doubt"—he gave a short, sardonic laugh—"if I handed you over to him he would make me a present of it! Nor would he destroy it if we left, but invite in other Phœnicians to work the factories, whose products he values. Moreover, he would fear the wrath of Baal-Hammon, titulary god of Carthage, did he raze the city without reason. I think of no better plan than to evacuate the city and wait until his fickle fancy turns to another. . . . Or—it may be—it is barely possible that pride and cupidity will govern him. No such city as Carthage has ever risen in his empire, none other famous and beautiful throughout the world. He is the envy of Egypt, of Abyssinia, of all other kingdoms in Africa. And we pay him heavy tribute and furnish him with all he desires. It would be long before he could repeople Carthage again, and meanwhile she would

fall to ruin, and he would hear the mutterings of Baal-Hammon. I believe that he would capitulate on our own terms and bid us return. He does not love you, Dido; he is moved only by vengeance. He hates you because you have twice outwitted him, and he would bring your proud head to the dust. Let us leave as quickly as may be, and in due course I will go to his capital and make him see reason."

Dido smiled enigmatically. "Send word to have those 'ambassadors' taken to the throne-room. Await me beyond the door, for I must lean on your arm lest my ruse be suspected."

Anna arrayed her hastily in a robe of state and hung many jewels about her. She selected a crown of emeralds, diamonds, rubies, sapphires, topaz, amethyst, beryl, pearls, carbuncles: a barbaric combination calculated to impress the messengers of a barbaric king.

When the door closed behind her Anna prostrated herself in joy before the statue of Astarte. Dido was all Queen once more!

[X]

THE Queen sat on her throne, Tadmelak standing beside her. Before the dais five enormous blacks, magnificently arrayed, knelt with insolent humility.

"Your King would wed the Queen of Carthage," she said with cold graciousness. "An undeserved honor, and one duly appreciated. But I have been a Queen in my own realm, and as such go unwillingly. That he must know. But I am too weak to defy the great King of Libya, and I submit. I ask but that he spare my city and consent that it be governed by the Lord Tadmelak, son of Hannibal, under the same conditions that have existed hitherto. And that he grant me a month in which to lament my former estate. Then, with ashes on my head, and all my people wailing and weeping, I shall go forth with the great King and dwell in his palace for the rest of my ill-fated life."

"It will be quite a month before the ships of the Trojans can be made ready for sea," interposed Tadmelak hastily. "It would be well for Iarbas not to meet Æneas, whatever his numbers. The Trojan is a mighty

warrior and protected by his gods. Venus would convert him into a living flame and he would consume Iarbas to ashes."

One of the Libyans spoke. "The great King has no wish to meet the goddess-born of Troy, for although he fears him not, he would not incur the wrath of the gods. We are empowered to grant any reasonable request, O Queen, and it is far from the intention of the mighty King to destroy Carthage, do you submit to his will. It is the Libyan city that does the Libyan god and the god-born himself most honor. And no one so high in the esteem of Iarbas as the Lord Tadmelak. A month from to-day the greatest of all Kings will arrive in the state befitting your dignity and escort you to his capital."

Dido drew a quick sigh of relief. She had feared she would be given short shrift. And once more she had outwitted Iarbas.

"The Queen bids you bear to the King her humble gratitude for his gracious condescension," she said in her loftiest manner. "That short month I shall spend in the temples of my gods, taking leave of them forever, and mourning my downfall. Then I go to him resigned, and he may do with me as he will."

She rose, signifying the audience was over, and they backed out from her presence.

She turned to Tadmelak.

"Say nothing to the people for a time," she said.

"We have a month, and I would not hear their lamentations too soon. . . . But—" A sudden hope leapt in her heart. "Go to Æneas and tell him of this dreadful fate that threatens me. Perhaps—perhaps he will linger now and teach us how to defy Iarbas. It is said that in battle he was inspired by Jove himself, else would he have been slain with Hector and those other princes of the House of Troy. Surely he will not flee when the woman he loved so well is threatened with worse than death!"

Tadmelak turned pale, but answered without argument. "I will take you to the royal bedchamber and then seek him. I too cannot believe that he would desert you in your extremity."

He returned an hour later. His bronzed face was almost white, his eyes blazing. Dido stood before the door and he avoided her eager hopeful eyes.

"Curses on that Trojan traitor!" he shouted. "May the foul fiends rend him before he ever reaches the Italian shore. He would not listen, although I pleaded as never in my life before. 'Pious Æneas'! 'Foremost in righteousness, incomparable in goodness'! Groveling superstition has turned him from a man into a wooden image of the gods. Carthage—Dido—are wiped from his memory! He turned his head aside and his Captains shouted execrations. I asked them if they had forgotten the hospitality of Carthage when they were

shipwrecked on her shore. They replied that was as naught to the decree of the gods and the future greatness of their King. They would have slain me as I stood there for striving to turn Æneas from his 'high purpose' had not Achates, the only sane man among them, bade them sheathe their swords. But he was as inexorable as any. And Æneas uttered never a word! He did not even offer to take you with him and save you from Iarbas—for I told him nothing of our plan to evacuate Carthage. He sails four days hence. The gods grant Iarbas has no spies in the city."

"Go! Go!" whispered Dido. "You did all that any man could and I am grateful. . . ."

[XI]

Anna, again distraught, spent the night beside the bed where Dido lay moaning and tossing. Her hour of triumph over self had been brief, for there was nothing of the Queen left in this frantic despairing woman, alternately calling upon the gods to curse Æneas and bewailing her fate. But toward morning she burst into violent weeping, and once more Anna permitted herself to believe the worst was over.

When Dido spoke at last her words were coherent and her voice commanding.

"I will not admit those women to my presence. The ravages in my face after this night of agony are not to be accounted for by a twisted ankle. Bid them roll in the laver and then leave the room."

After the bath she ate her breakfast of fruit and bread and honey, and dressed herself with Anna's aid. Her face was drawn and pallid, and her eyes sunken with deep stains beneath them, but her bearing was calm and proud.

"Go and tell my ladies they may return to their

houses until I am well again," she said. "The palace will be dull for them—a fair excuse. Otherwise I could not avoid admitting them to this room to receive their sympathy for my hurt ankle! Then return, for there is still another thing I would ask you to do."

The message was not unwelcome to the ladies yawning in the great room on the other side of the little court, wondering what to do with themselves, deprived of hunt and banquet and the lively converse of the Queen. They sent sincere condolences and hastened laughing from the palace.

When Anna returned, Dido spoke with slow, cold emphasis. "Æneas is dead to me as I to him, and this I would symbolize in my own way. Do you give orders that a lofty pyre be erected in the large central court. It must be of pitch pine that it may burn the more quickly, and it must be built like a pyramid and ascend high above the lower windows of the palace. On it shall be placed the marriage-bed, the sword and shield of Æneas, and the mantle I wove for him with my own hands. As his fleet leaves the harbor I will set the torch and thus burn to ashes every memory of the man for whom I broke my vow. And in a way conceived not by Tadmelak but by Dido, I shall save my city and my people. Not for Dido's sake shall they be driven into exile again. But of this I shall say nothing until the moment comes, and it is useless to question me. Nor must you hint of it even to Tadmelak."

"Well that you burn all mementos of that dastardly man," cried Anna with enthusiasm. "And you will leave this room for another? I ask you no questions, dear Elissa, for I know well that your wisdom is even greater than Tadmelak's. No man has ever outwitted you, and that black barbarian will smite his head against the walls of his palace and howl, even as Pygmalion must have done when we fled from Tyre."

"Yes, he will howl in impotent wrath," said Dido grimly. "No, I shall not leave this room. It strengthens my purpose. Go, now, and give the order. The pyre must be finished two days hence."

Dido felt all the calm of ultimate despair. She moaned and wept no more even when alone, nor did her thoughts dwell on those long months of love. If they rose unbidden she banished them summarily, and stood at a window overlooking the court where a dozen slaves were erecting the pyre. Sometimes she shuddered, for when that pyre fell to ashes all hope would be dead indeed. But the knowledge that she would save Carthage and her people sustained her. Never should it be recorded that Dido had been untrue to her sacred trust. There were moments when she was filled with exaltation and forgot that youth was gone forever, and all those bright hopes she had cherished when the first stones of Carthage were laid in the earth.

She prayed no more to Astarte, but once she opened the door of the room dedicated to the memory of her

Tyrian husband, and laid fresh flowers on the altar. She did not kneel, but stood before it wondering if it were not in some life long past that she had begged him to return if but for a moment.

"You are avenged, Sychæus," she said. "Would that I had remained faithful to my vow, for there only lay peace and a long life of dignity and power. If we meet in the dark realm below, take thy Elissa by the hand and forgive her, for youth and passion and the gods betrayed her."

She had banished the women from the antechamber, the slaves from her part of the palace, and paced the halls unceasingly. Anna made no remonstrance, for the more she tired her body, the more likely was she to sleep at night. Dido permitted her to occupy one of the divans, and she sometimes rose to steal across the room to where the Queen lay inert and silent on another. A dim light burned, and a brief glance persuaded her that her sister slept profoundly.

In the morning Dido permitted her maidens to bathe and dress her and then dismissed them for the day. Their eyes were curious, but to what might be itching in their minds she gave not a thought. If they had been turned suddenly into automatons she would not have noticed.

Once more she paced the halls, bidding Anna leave her until nightfall, for the time had passed when she could compel herself to eat.

She paused often at the window overlooking the central court. It was late in the afternoon when the pyre was finished, and it rose almost to the window at which she stood. A rude flight of steps had been built and the marriage-bed was carried up and disposed on the summit. Anna herself mounted with the Tyrian mantle and spread it over the couch. Had not Dido's eyes been watching she would have spat upon it. A slave followed with the arms Æneas had forgotten and not dared send for, and she placed the shield on the breast of the cloak and the sword at the right hand.

Dido, staring down after they had left, saw the rigid form of Æneas extended there, the flames rising and crackling about him. To her he was already dead—but not for her the poor consolation of his ashes!

The Trojan fleet was to sail early on the morrow. Dido sent for the High Steward and bade him invite the members of the Council, the Elders and the Shophetim to assemble in the court as the ships left the harbor.

Before dawn she went to the roof.

The great golden stars swung low in the dark sky, lanterns hung there to light mariners on their way. But there was not a sail on the waters. The world slept in peace, as if neither storms on the sea nor storms in the hearts of men had ever convulsed it. The sun lingered on the far threshold of the nether world, weary, perhaps, of his everlasting round. . . . The sun-god

of the Egyptians . . . Like mortal sovereigns he must rise and sleep, rise and sleep, wake ever to shed the light of his august countenance on his people, spur them to their daily tasks, warn them and guide them: . . .

Her thoughts floated idly. Did he really sleep in the nether world? . . . Did he draw a dark mantle about him as he traversed it in the long night? In that dread realm the poor ghosts of the dead wandered in a cold twilight, no sun to warm them, no stars to guide them. . . . Was the sun, for the night, himself but a ghost, his fires as dead as theirs, symbolizing the fate of all mortals? Did he never throb and shine for a moment, callously reminding them of all they had lost . . .

The stars paled. Sharp golden rays darted upward far into the east. Light spread over the world.

The sun rose on a calm sea. There was a light breeze to fill the sails, and the vast blue sweep of the Mediterranean promised a swift voyage without hazard to men well acquainted with the worst of its moods. A beneficence of the approving gods, no doubt!

Never had there been a fairer morning. The air was warm and caressing. Birds sang in the trees, their brilliant plumage darting through the green. Blue-bodied lizards with scarlet heads and tails, came out to sun themselves on the parapet. There was not a cloud on the deep blue sky, the air was heavy with the perfume of flowers, rising from the palace gardens. Doves flew

from the roof of Tanit's Temple and circled about her.

She looked down into the city. The streets were filled with people hastening to the shore to witness the departure of the Trojans. Their excited voices came up to her. High and low, men and women, all were bound for the bay to wave farewell to the glorious being who, some believed, had descended from the heaven of the gods, now cast out at the will of their Queen.

Her people! She wondered if they had missed her in the Temple. But their wants and grievances were few. Her neglect had served them no ill.

There was a sudden loud blast of a trumpet at the head of the gulf. A peremptory summoning blast followed by a mighty shout.

A bireme with sail set and double bank of rowers in place, left the harbor, then another, and another, seventeen in all. Masts and prows were hung with garlands. The sailors sang as they bent rhythmically to the oars, helmeted Captains poured libations. She was too high above to distinguish their faces, but none could fail to recognize the tall commanding form of Æneas on the forward ship.

The strong fiber of body and mind had been sapped by fasting and tension. Calm deserted her. Her breath came short and her hands flew to her breast. Surely he would look up! He must know she would be on the roof . . . that small boon would cost him nothing, nor anger his gods. . . . She ran to the parapet and

leaned far over, ready to wave her scarf . . . one last token of understanding. . . .

But his eyes were fixed on the blue sea before him, his body as immobile as the god on the sharp prow of his ship. Little Iulus danced with excitement beside him.

Fury possessed her. Even more outraged was the Queen than the woman. Why had she not told the truth to her people that they might avenge her? Burn those ships and cut those insolent Trojans in pieces? Pride! Pride! She should have meted out vengeance, not stood aside like a creature of no spirit and let the gods have their way with that bigoted fool. She raised her arms and called upon her own gods to sink the ships or visit him with defeat and humiliation in the birthplace of his race. She called upon the sky to crash down and the sea to open and drag him helpless and struggling to the depths. Oh, to see him drown before her eyes. . . .

But the ships rode the sea proudly, and she saw Æneas lay his hand on the head of Iulus and point to the cloudlike shore of Sicily. And beyond lay the Italian land, the goal of his hopes!

"O gods! O gods!" she cried. "Let him—" And then she whirled about suddenly. Fire was in her brain and her ears rang, but both had taken note of a distant trumpet blast, and it came not from the sea, but from the mainland.

An ominous sight met her eyes. All the isthmus and the plain beyond swarmed with black hordes. Elephants, camels, horses, crowded men on foot brandishing spears, as they pressed forward to the gates of the wall.

Iarbas!

Madness vanished. Thought swung back to its throne. Æneas passed from her mind forever.

She descended swiftly to her room and covered her face with a veil of golden tissue, then made her way to the court.

All the invited guests were there: Counselors, Elders, Shophetim; Belator in his robes of office. The windows were alive with eager faces, for the ladies of the court, gathering from the excited rumors flying about the city that Æneas was to be burned in effigy, had hastened unsummoned to the palace, and the tire-maidens, heedless for once of the Queen's displeasure, had secured points of vantage. The young men of the court, having hissed Æneas on his way, came with light hearts to witness the ceremony that would blot him from the memory of Carthage.

Anna was the only woman among the men gathered about the pyre. She held a lighted torch in her hand.

Some of the dignitaries were amused, others disapproving. This grand gesture of scorn seemed to them unworthy of a great Queen. They were not a dramatic people and they would have had Dido preserve the cold

dignity with which she had ignored Æneas, even as if he had never shaken the calm tenor of their lives.

Tadmelak, alone among them, was content with this symbolic extinction of Æneas. He knew the power exerted over Dido by her imagination. If she believed all memory of that man would lie in ashes with that pyre bearing his sword, shield and mantle, that hateful marriage-bed, so would it be.

But Dido, to his amazement as well as theirs, instead of taking the torch from Anna, ran up the steps and mounted the marriage-bed. She threw back her veil and lifted the sword. The gold tissue made a halo about her head and the sword flashed in the sun.

"Iarbas is at the gates." Her clear bell-like tones rang in their ears for the last time. "He has demanded my hand in marriage and brings a great army to enforce his will. Do you seek to defend your Queen from his lust he will raze the city, and the streets will run red with your blood, your wives and children sold into slavery. There is no time to flee, no way but one to save my city and my people from destruction. Go forth, Tadmelak, son of Hannibal, and tell him that Dido is no more and that you are King of Carthage."

And before the stunned staring crowd below had grasped her meaning she had fallen on the sword. Tadmelak alone had divined her purpose and was halfway up the pyre. But the sword had pierced her heart, and when he flung himself beside her and tore it from her

body, the warm blood spurted over his hands. The wild terrified screams of the women drowned his own lamentations.

But even as he was pressing his lips to that face he had loved so long, searching in those glazing eyes for a last flicker of life, he heard the loud menacing roar beyond the isthmus wall, the cries of people in the streets. He laid Dido gently down on her marriage-bed, placed the shield on her breast, and folded the mantle she had woven about her.

Then he unsheathed his own sword and descended the steps at a bound.

"I myself will apply the torch when I return," he said to the dumb horror-stricken men—Anna was prone, tearing her face and hair. "Iarbas must see her and know she is dead. I will mount the wall and parley with him, and he will enter and leave his army without. Dido died to save Carthage and her people, and from now henceforth I live but to obey her will as ever. Remain here until I return."

The dignitaries of Carthage prostrated themselves before the King. Tadmelak went forth to summon Iarbas to the pyre of the dead Queen. An hour later a tall column of smoke shot with sparks, rising above the palace walls, cheered Æneas on his way.

THE END

AUTHORITIES: Oxford Bible. The Æneid. Alfred J. Church. Wallace B. Fleming. Mabel Moore. Georges Perrot and Charles Chipiez. George Rawlinson. R. Bosworth Smith.

NOTES

I have accepted the chronology of Virgil, for he perhaps knew as much about it as we do to-day. Archeological opinion shifts from time to time, and ancient history with it. Moreover, in offering this humble tribute to the Virgil Bimillennium, what else could I do? Far be it from me to insult the memory of one of the Immortals!

The quotations from the Æneid are taken from Professor J. W. Mackail's prose translation, and I hereby make grateful acknowledgment.

The translator of the Assyrian epic "Ishtar and Izdubar" is Leonidas Le Cenci Hamilton and it is to be found in its entirety in that valuable work, "The World's Greatest Literature."

The Mediterranean was known as the Great Sea

to the Ancients, and Africa seems to have been called by more names than one, but I thought it best to use the familiar terms—and elsewhere as well.

Perhaps I may also be forgiven for anticipating certain prophetic warnings.

No doubt Biblical scholars will quarrel with the assertion that Phœnician ships were "the first to venture out of inland waters." But it must be remembered that the Phœnicians believed this, or chose to believe it.

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Dido, queen of hearts